

10/14/13

Week 42

James: Boy, what a joy to share this time with you. I welcome you, Betty and me, James, welcome you to *LIFE Today* and to the Awaken Now conference, at least a portion of it.

What a blessing to see Gateway Church filled with people who were filled to overflowing with the love and life of God. You talk about a crowd awakening! You're going to hear what I consider and really and truly, it was like Beth Moore sitting on the front row, and she is listening to the lineup of speakers up until she spoke that night; she and Governor Huckabee spoke on that night, the first night. She said, "Who are all of these people?" She didn't know some of the speakers. And she'd said, "Never in my life have I ever heard anything so wonderful!" She was absolutely delirious!

Well, it just built all the way through. As a matter of fact, we brought back a lot of the speakers that many of you may have heard 30 years ago: Peter Lord, Jack Taylor, Rick Godwin and Jim Hilton and Dudley Hall. Boy, what a blessing!

But listen to me, I think that last message, and of course, I closed it but I have to say Sammy Rodriguez hit it not only in the upper deck, he hit it out of the stadium for the glory of God. And you're going to hear that message today and tomorrow, part one, part two; you're going to hear all of it. And you don't want to miss the conclusion because something happened there that absolutely amazed me what God put on my heart to do at the end and you will be blessed.

Now, Betty, I've told you that many of the things that are on my heart, you prayed there because God puts them on your heart because you spend time on your face before him in behalf of the people he died for and he loves and a nation that you love, and the freedom that you cherish. I'm telling you, Sammy sounded a trumpet on the holy mountain, a call to Awaken Now. Here's part one, and you don't want to miss the conclusion tomorrow -- Sammy Rodriguez.

Begin video clip

Sammy: A few years ago I was with Senator John McCain and a couple other leaders in D.C. and we were having a press conference on an issue that I'm not going to get into. We were having this press conference and this reporter came along and said...

And I just took the red eye flight from San Francisco over to Washington, D.C. and by the way, if you don't believe in any sort of demon possession, if your theological framework or optics do not at all conduce you to believing in demonic possession; when you take a five and a half hour flight and there's a kid crying behind you the entire time, you begin to believe.

[Laughter]

So I got off of the flight, and I got my caramel macchiato, what I needed at the press conference, and a reporter says --

For whatever reason, we're in a place that is standing room only. A reporter comes along and says, "Reverend Rodriguez, why are there so many people suffering from angst" -- this is 2006 -- "Or bothered by so many Hispanics in America?" So again, red eye flight, didn't sleep, and what? "Why are there so...?"

So I looked at the reporter and said -- I thought it was a download; I'm still convinced it is. I looked at the reporter and said, "The very prophetic purpose of our community lies imbedded in the very term Hispanic."

Reporter said, "What?"

[Laughter]

I said, "I'm going to repeat that. The very prophetic purpose of our community lies embedded in the very term Hispanic."

She went, "Explain that."

I said, "Well, let's break it down. Two syllables, first capital h: his. Second, panic."

[Laughter]

So she looked at me and went, "Explain that."

And I went, "Real simple. We're not here to teach America salsa, merengue or the cha cha cha. We're not here to increase anyone's dividend portfolio as invested wisely, wisely in Taco Bell! We're not here to make anyone press one for English, or two for Spanish. We are His Panic; we are here to bring panic to the kingdom of darkness in the name of Jesus Christ."

[Cheers & applause]

That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

[Cheers & applause]

There's a fine line between the prophetic and the pathetic.

[Laughter]

And in the midst of pathetic reality we find a very strong prophetic declaration pointing to the answer for a hopeless world. Last year's -- in the time we had together, I shared a component to this narrative but I want to share with you John chapter one, 29. You've heard this.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Later on the Apostle John saw the revelation on the island of Patmos and declared revelations 5:13 that: I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever."

As we confront moral relativism, spiritual apathy and cultural decadence, we understand that the number one problem in America is not any of the above mentioned, the number one problem in America is a lukewarm church.

So because it is a lukewarm church, a defacto, if not de jour sleeping bride, permit me to share with you briefly *awaken now* with the agenda of the lamb. Behold the lamb.

Touch your neighbor and say, "Behold the lamb."

Touch your other neighbor, the one with the attitude and say, "Behold the lamb."

[Laughter]

We do live in difficult times. These are times of great uncertainty, angst, consternation and flux. We live in times of social, economic, political, moral, cultural crisis.

A few months ago the obituary of American Christianity in 21st century stood written by a number of key prominent evangelical scholars and leaders. These are Christian scholars who came to the inevitable conclusion that Christianity in America will not survive the 21st century in any viable or sustainable manner.

Now, I beg to differ. I wholeheartedly beg to differ for housing markets may crumble, the stock market may plummet, banks may fail, but there is one institution that is still alive and well, the church of Jesus Christ is still standing.

[Cheers & applause]

And this may sound archaic, it may sound old school, epic or vintage, but I still believe that Jesus saves. And I still believe that Jesus heals. And I still believe that Jesus delivers. And I know that this is very old school but I still believe that Jesus is coming back again.

[Cheers & applause]

Behold the lamb.

I believe that as the church of Jesus Christ, we have an opportunity awakening now, to make -- not even here within members and participants, but true disciples. I believe

that we stand at the precipice of a new movement in America. And this new movement will not be a political movement but a Christ-centered, Bible-based, righteousness and justice movement. The next movement will not be an occupy Wall Street movement. It won't produce riots in the streets. It will produce revival and renewal across America.

This movement will affirm biblical orthodoxy, it will reform the culture, transform our political discourse, revolutionize the marketplace and usher in a new awakening.

I am convinced, you may call me polyonic, uber-optimistic, an utopic inclined individual, I'm convinced that for the church of Jesus the best is yet to come. For at the end of day this will not be a pathetic movement driven by expediency and agendas of man but a prophetic movement driven by the impetus of the cross.

What is the agenda of this new movement? What is the agenda that will awaken the church? The only agenda that can save America, it's not the agenda of the donkey or the agenda of the elephant, the only agenda that can transform America and awaken the church is the agenda of the lamb. Behold, the Lamb of God!

[Cheers & applause]

We may have to explain to people about donkeys and elephants later on. That's a different story.

[Laughter]

The agenda of the lamb awakens the church with the spirit of God. At the heart of the lamb's agenda stands the church, conceived on the cross and contracted in the empty tomb and delivered in the upper room, the lamb's church is a spirit and power church.

Well, forget Harry Potter and Hogwarts. The conduit of biblical illusions we know very well there are real spirits in the cities of America today. The spirit of pharaoh is alive, holding people captive in the Egypt, a spiritual and economic bondage and fear.

The spirit of goliath still lives mocking and intimidating the children of God. The spirit of jezebel still makes men and women hide in caves of sexual perversions and manipulation. The spirit of Absalom is dividing homes, churches and relationships while the spirit of Herod is killing the young through abortion, through poverty and sex trafficking, murdering infant dreams and visions.

I have news for you. There is a spirit, I don't care what you see on M.S.N.B.C., C.N.B.C., FOX, A.B.C., N.B.C., C.B.S., and even Univision, there is a spirit more powerful than all these spirits combined.

[Cheers & applause]

Church, we have an opportunity. We need to tell this nation and the world that the most powerful spirit alive today is not the spirit of pharaoh, it is not the spirit of Saul, Absalom, goliath, jezebel or Herod. I don't care what you read in the news, the most powerful spirit on the planet is still the holy spirit of almighty God: the spirit of the lamb, the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of God indeed. There is no greater spirit on this planet than the spirit of almighty God. Bless the lord for it is not by might, nor by power but by my spirit saith the lord.

We need to rise up and declare to every narrative and spirit that facilitates the platform of moral relativism or spiritual apathy, of cultural decadence and ecclesiastical lukewarm-ness, we must say the following: for every pharaoh there must be a Moses. For every goliath there must be a David. For every Nebuchadnezzar there must be a Daniel. For every jezebel, there must be an Elijah. For every Herod there must be a Jesus. And for every devil that rises up against you, there is a mightier God that will rise up for you.

[Cheers & applause]

Behold the lamb! Behold the lamb!

The agenda of the lamb awakens freedom. Isaiah 58:6: To loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke.

Second Corinthians 3:17: for the lord is a spirit and wherever the spirit of the lord is present there is freedom.

We do live in a world where people find themselves bound; bound by sin, pornography, sexual immorality, addiction, alcoholism, depression, loneliness, dismay, anxiety, fear, confusion -- the past, failure, defeat. And some people beyond me have an unexplainable addiction to caramel macchiato.

[Laughter]

[Praying in Spanish] La Sangre do Cristo me limpia de todo pecado.

Do you know why there is so much bondage? The enemy understands the most powerful person in the world is not the one with riches or the ones with guns or the ones with armies or the ones with fame. The most powerful human on the planet is a person set free by the blood of the lamb.

[Cheers & applause]

Free people do great things. There was a free man who approached Pharaoh in Egypt and said, "Let my people go."

It was a free man who stepped into the Promised Land and declared, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the lord."

It was a free man who stared down a giant called goliath and said, "You come against me with a spirit, a sword, a javelin, but I came against you in the name of the lord God almighty.

It was free young people who refused to bow and subsequently exhibited freedom even in the midst of a fiery furnace.

It was a free man who prayed down fire from heaven and then had the audacity to say, "Get ready, here comes the rain."

In more recent history, in our nation it was free men who declared, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

It was a free man who confronted the evil of slavery and declared with malice towards none and charity towards all.

There was a free young man who had a dream that one day we will live in a nation where we would be judged not by the color of our skin but rather by the content of our character.

The greatest expression of freedom came 2000 years ago when hanging on a tree by his sacrifice, Christ, a free man, freedom incarnate personified what he declared in John 8:36: for he who the Son sets free is free indeed.

Are there any free people in the house here this morning?

[Cheers & applause]

It is time to tell America that our freedom does not come from the executive branch, our freedom does not come from the legislative branch, our freedom does not come from the judicial branch, our freedom stems not from the branches of government, our freedom comes from the Tree of life, the Lamb that is on the throne, that is where our freedom comes from.

Let's redeem the narrative and with great due deference to the programs and to the addiction counseling programs, that have a mantra that requires individuals to repeat on a daily basis that once an addict always an addict. Through Christ we have a better declaration: once Jesus sets you free, you are free indeed!

[Cheers & applause]

You can be free from a life of sin, Revelation 1:6. In Christ you can be free from the torment of fear, Second Timothy 1:7. In Christ you can be free from the sentence of condemnation, Romans chapter eight, verse one. For we are baptized with Christ, in Romans, crucified with Christ in Galatians, seated with Christ in Ephesians, strengthened by Christ in Philippians, hidden in Christ in Colossians, and when we get to the book of Revelation we are ruling and reigning and celebrating with Jesus Christ forever more!

[Cheers & applause]

Behold the lamb!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Amen and amen and amen and amen! God bless you, Sammy Rodriguez.

And God bless all of you who prayed for that conference, who attended, and who prayed for the ultimate effect of that conference to be the Church of Jesus Christ awakens, puts on the armor of light, pierces this present darkness with the transforming power of his radiance and his life.

Betty, the only answer to securing freedom is for us to be personally set free by the power of God and then that transforming power can change hearts and minds. It's so much more than just trying to win an election or to get some better policy in place. We've got to have better people transformed by the power of God. There is no substitute for the cross, there is no substitute for the redemptive power of the cross, there is no substitute for Jesus and the power of his Word.

Betty, the solid foundation upon which civilizations, personal lives, marriages, families, and futures rest is the unshakable rock, the foundational truth of the truth that sets us free; and that is the Lord Jesus and the word of the living God, not just carried in our hands but hidden in our hearts.

Thank God for Sammy Rodriguez. Now you don't want to miss the conclusion to this message. I believe that Sammy will show every believer just how important your

personal witness is for Christ today and the power and importance of your prayers. We want to see people set free.

Betty, our viewers have made it very clear to us, "You show us an effective way to help somebody and we're going to join our hearts first and extend our hands in mercy and love and compassion to rescue the perishing and care for the dying." The very thing Jesus came to do, and you find joy in doing it.

I want to show you something that's going to move you. When you see girls that didn't choose an occupation, they were literally trapped, ensnared, enslaved, imprisoned, and they have been put in bondage to be sex trafficked, to be objects of someone's personal pursuit of gratification at the expense of little children, little girls and little boys.

But by the grace of God and I'm telling you, it's the love of God, it's the love of God first of all in missionaries; they go in the pit of hell and they begin to reach out to rescue those that are trapped. And they have one other need, not only prayer, but they need our support to help them.

Once we saw how effective the work was, we brought it to you the viewers and you are so amazing. I'm telling you, Christ in us is the hope of his glory revealed. His glory revealed first to us and then through us is what impacts everything on planet earth in a profound and positive way -- that's kingdom imprint. When we show you something that works, you always reach out to help.

I want you to listen to the heart cry of some girls right now that we can and together we will rescue. Listen closely and then let's put God's arms of love around them.

On the mission field:

>> I know I once was a child.

Some still say that I am.

But what I remember of it has been smothered by the darkness I know now.

Look at me! Not past me!

My life is not mine.

I'm owned yet I'm disowned.

I can hardly breathe.

My mind is shattered into a thousand pieces -- shattered!

There have been times, eight times a day at the hands of strangers -- over 2500 times this year -- at the hands of sick strangers.

Please... someone rescue me!

Put me back together.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Twenty-five hundred times, basically plundered, raped, sold.

Betty, it's hard to understand that these things happen but they do and it is not by choice. It is not something that they chose in any way. They want to be freed from it and they can be because God has placed us with wonderful missionaries who have literally planted their life in the midst of this pain and suffering to, in a very personal way, put the arms of love around these people.

And what they're asking us to do, Betty, and I know there may be some viewers who say, "I wouldn't mind going over there and spending months or years of my life to help them."

And the workers always say, "We don't need tourists, we don't need onlookers, we need the wherewithal to continue doing what God put in our heart to do because it works."

So Betty, we know that if we'll help these mission workers and these committed to rescuing those who have been trapped in the sex trafficking. We can set them free, we can give them a future and teach them how to make a living and literally get them out of this bondage.

Betty: James, my heart was really touched listening to that young lady in a desperate call for help; sensing and feeling that maybe there isn't any help out there. I want her to know there are so many more like her. I want them to know help is on the way if

you'll help us help them. Please! They're desperate, they're hurting. They don't know anything else in their life but that and the tragedy of it. I want them to know hope and joy and peace and the love of Jesus that we demonstrate when we reach out to them.

James: Well, Betty it is obvious that our viewers have said in almost a united expression of love that you want to rescue them. I've told you every time we have brought this to your attention that when we first brought it, we were afraid church people would say, "We don't want to hear about that. We don't want to know that!" And we actually stepped out almost where angels fear to tread because God showed us his heart and the heart of those mission and rescue workers.

So we brought it to you and you said, "Thank you for showing us what can be done. What love can do!" And you've made it possible for us to expand the work.

Now think about this and I'll always start right with what I call the bottom line. It takes \$128 to rescue a child, either before they get them or get them out, that's the average cost. So I'll always ask you if you can rescue one do it. But remember you can break that down and give a portion of it. But everyone needs to do something; it's not like you say, "Well, I hope somebody does it." You're the somebody. You really are the answer to the heart cry and the need by just doing what God put in your heart.

We have to raise over \$760,000 for this year's emphasis and we've got to raise over a quarter of a million dollars to finish restoring and rebuilding the *LIFE* Center in the Ukraine that burned. So we know we've got to have a miracle expression of love, over a million dollars.

We have some special gifts for you. Betty's story has transformed religious people who were not free. It is an incredible -- this is the story of her journey in life and in Christ. And then the Life Application Study Bible; we always want to place something in your hands that will bless you.

Remember this, \$1280, we can rescue 10, and we've got the beautiful commemorative bronze that shows you the love of God for children and for people that need help. Please go to the phone or go online and make the gift God put on your heart.

Now remember, this is the last week now in this emphasis and we really need a miracle outpouring of love. Thank you so much for your help! Thanks for calling.

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.

This is the last week so please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Well, Betty and I want to say thank you. I remind you this is the last week. It's not too late for everyone to do something in expressing God's heart.

Betty's story, *Free to Be Me*, it really brings freedom home. She was a -- I call her the "original church lady" but she didn't even know the Lord; she was just a church member. Then she found freedom from a very shy timid girl to begin to release the river of life and love freely as you see it. You're going to be blessed by her story.

Thanks so much for your help! Remember, last week!