

12/12/13
Week 49
James and Betty Robison
Sarah Kovac

James: Oh, boy! Thank you so much. Y'all are great! And we welcome you to LIFE Today.

I'm James Robison; Betty and I are I'm thrilled to have one of the most beautiful ladies I have ever seen. And look at this. This is called... this is Sarah Kovac. You're going to meet her in a few minutes but I'm going to show you a little clip of her before you actually meet her sitting here with us. But it's called *In Capable Arms*. You'll notice she seems to have small arms but they don't function... well, I'll tell you what, let me show you a miracle and then you're going to get to hear the miracle of love and grace and just the beauty of God, and wonderful parents, and a beautiful person that will inspire you. Take a look.

Begin video clip

>> Okay. Don't do that! You're kicking!

It's getting to where we can basically just give him some oatmeal in the morning, a couple of bottles during the day and I nurse him at night and he sleeps all night long because he is the best baby ever!

Let's get situated. Yeah baby, here we go.

Hopefully the video angle doesn't make anybody sick.

End of clip

In the studio

James: How about welcoming Sarah Kovac to LIFE Today? Sarah, I love you!

Sarah: I love you too!

James: That is so neat. Now did take you a while to get to where you could change that diaper and the way you did that.

Sarah: I'm still working on it, I think. I'm on the second kid and I still fiddle with it.

James: Tell us, because when you talk about *In Capable Arms*, you're talking about arms that don't function the way we would think they should and yet you are in very capable arms. You're living a life embraced by grace, in the arms of God.

I told you when we were visiting before we came out here, the glow and glory of God is on you. You're a beautiful girl but your countenance really does reveal Jesus.

If you ever wonder sometimes, what does Jesus look like? That's what Jesus looks like. And you can have that look of Jesus that she has on her but only if it is the real Jesus.

By the way, you'll see a lot of people who will be at church, they try to look spiritual.

[Laughter]

It's kind of spooky.

[Laughter]

But then you can see some people that... just the glory of God is on you. What is it... what is the challenge, what is the disease?

Sarah: It's Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita. I would like you to spell that.

[Laughter]

You'd have to be charismatic to even understand that.

[Laughter]

Us plain folks call it A.M.C.

James: So you were born that way?

Sarah: Yes. Something wasn't right when I was in my mom's womb and I wasn't moving correctly for some reason, and for some people the reason is different than others. But my muscles just weren't getting worked out and my joints weren't moving so when I was born they continued to be underdeveloped and small.

James: How did they handle it? Mom and dad?

Sarah: Well, my memories are little vague of that time but they weren't following Christ at that time. They had just gotten married and just knew really nothing about being parents and let alone being parent to a child with a disability, but God really just swept in and his grace was there.

It's kind of funny because they moved in with my grandmother Grace and she was a huge influence on keeping their marriage together and praying for them and leading them the way they needed to go. So I mean it is a whole book in and of itself.

James: And you've covered the story though; you tell the journey. What do you want people to hear?

Sarah: Well, I grew up in the church. We started attending church when I was two. It was during the whole more charismatic era. I grew up feeling like there was something wrong with me in that why didn't God heal me because I knew that he could... like I was doing something wrong.

James: You were hearing about God being a healer. And he is.

Sarah: He is! Absolutely.

James: No question about it.

Sarah: He chose to heal a different part of me that really needed it more than my body. It took me so long to figure that out, and I was so angry for the longest time. I knew that God didn't make me this way; that we live in a fallen world and things aren't perfect and that's just how I am but I didn't know who to be angry at. I'm the one statistic that you think you're never going to be, the one in 3,000 that ends up with a disability. I was angry and I didn't know who to be angry at.

As I wrote my story, which was written through countless tears at five in the morning before my son would wake up. I'd get up and go in my office and type; and yeah, I type with my feet.

[Laughter]

But I'd type and the things I had to work through when I wrote this book, it was a huge healing thing for me of itself. But I started to notice a pattern and it looked to me like grief. I had studied some psychology in college; I really enjoy that but I thought

this sounds like the stages of grief that I'm writing. So I went to a counselor and she said, "Well, yeah. It looks different on different people. It's not always a swift journey through beginning to end and this is the first stage and this is your fifth, and now you've completed and here's your certificate, you're done grieving."

[Laughter]

I want people to go through my book and feel okay about reaching into those places that hurt, and there are journaling places in there to ask questions to help. But look at your story and being to allow God to use it and be willing to cry through it and be willing to grieve through it. And that's not all -- that sounds like my book is really dark; it's not all like that but I just want my reader to be able to be vulnerable with themselves and with God, who you can't hide anything from anyway.

Betty: Well, you mention in your book some of the challenges that you have had throughout and how God has walked you through those challenges in different ways.

Sarah: Yeah, especially one of the most difficult things I had to write through was in junior high, I struggled with suicidal thoughts. I had isolated myself. I can't blame anybody else for that. I felt different so I acted different and I pulled away. There came a point where I felt like I was a burden and that people would be happier if I wasn't there.

I can't say that God dropped a neon sign from heaven to tell me it's going to be fine but he had put me in a place where there were people who loved me around me. I was in a Christian school and the teachers... the teachers there, even though I didn't get along with the other students and I felt isolated, the teachers there were so supportive and I had these parents and friends that loved me. In so many ways he spoke to me through no words at all, just the love around me to pull me through those times.

James: I'm listening to your story and I have just such a love for you because of what I see in your honesty about your struggle with even the grieving process. Betty and I have been going through that. Betty and I'd say, in so many ways with the loss of our daughter, and even in the last few weeks, Betty has been able to say, "I didn't realize that my grieving wasn't just for the loss of our daughter, but it started in the last year or so when we were battling for Robin's health and I was really grieving."

Only in recent days has she been able to say, "I feel like I'm taking off the garments of heaviness and putting on the garments of praise." You can see that lightening, but the

grieving was part of the healing process and that's what you want people to understand.

As you were talking about it, though I was thinking about how many people... and then you just followed up talking about how some teachers really cared about you. So I'm seeing, and I want everybody to know this, that when the heaviness is great and the grief is great or the pain is great, that the need for love is so great. I'm really concerned about many of you who are watching. I don't know where you are, I don't know exactly what's going on but I do know as I listen to her, there are lot of you here identifying with her and you're grieving or you're lonely.

The thing is, when Betty and I were grieving over what happened with our daughter, kind of the same thing she said about these teachers, there were some people, many of you our viewers and our staff, and our immediate family, at least there was the comfort. There are some of you we're talking to right now that you don't feel like anybody notices. I don't know how I can make you believe this but while Sarah was talking, I'm noticing. Yes, I am because he is and he cares so deeply about you and for you that I want you to know that. Please know that! The capable arms, as she's talking about, are the arms of God... the lap of God.

When Betty and I started this program, the Lord told us to sit together and call the family in the family room so they can know the Father. This is a great place to get in the Father's lap and lean on him and get real near his heart; you begin to feel his heart and his heart's for you. And you can identify with his heart and then you can have a heart for others. So you just need to know how much God loves you.

If you need somebody to pray with you, there's a phone number there, just call, somebody will pray with you. We love you. Isn't that what you want people to hear?

Sarah: Absolutely.

James: No matter where they are. Isn't that you're trying to tell them: Isn't it?

Sarah: Yep.

James: That God will lift them up and he will tell you. You had a lot of decisions that you had to make. You faced fear; isn't that right?

Sarah: Sure.

James: That was a big issue with her. Tell us about that. Tell us some of the things that you faced and decisions you had to make.

Sarah: Well, of all the things I've had to face and had issues with, the hardest thing has been just my own insecurity. There's the physical things are difficult but when you isolate yourself or you keep reminding yourself how different you are or you... having children has brought me to face a lot of my struggles that I didn't have to before that. For example, I have to go out in public and struggle in front of people.

James: To just handle the children?

Sarah: And struggle is a daily thing for me. It's not uncomfortable for me but it is uncomfortable for other people to watch, which makes me uncomfortable because I know they're uncomfortable.

[Laughter]

James: Do people come over and try to help you? And are many of them quite helpful?

Sarah: Sometimes.

[Laughter]

Like I said, they'll make my life go faster if somebody helps me but most things, I can figure it out if I am given the time. And usually, it's other people that are feeling uncomfortable about the time it's taking me to accomplish the thing. So if I let them do it, a lot of time it's just because I'm trying to be gracious and considerate to them because it is making them comfortable and it's good to help other people and that's what God called us to do so I don't want to rob them of that. But then sometimes I want to. Sometimes I want to do it myself.

James: You don't know what they're thinking. That's part of the dilemma. You don't know what's going on and you don't want to annoy people. It's probably part of why you thought maybe I'd be better if I wasn't here. I may be a burden to people.

Betty: People want to be helpful and if they see someone struggling, I don't care what it is; they want to reach out and help. Sometimes they don't know how to. It's just like

with our children. Sometimes, as our children were growing up I wanted to help or do something for them but yet I knew I needed to stand back and allow them to do it or make the mistake or whatever and that's hard to do.

Sarah: Exactly. In the back of my book I interviewed my parents because they have such an amazing story themselves, but when I look back and see how they raised me and in my kindergarten year I think it was, I broke my arm four times just from falling because they don't bend. So anytime I could fall down, I would break something or I would smash my face up because I couldn't catch myself. But they let me get roller blades, they let me ride a bike; these are things I wanted to do, normal children things and I cannot imagine what was going through my mother's mind as I... I mean not that she wasn't right to do it, I'm just saying, I would have to leave the city. Now that I have kids... my son was two and a half before he ever had a Band-Aid because I hover.

[Laughter]

I don't know how she did it -- and my father too. But I'm so glad that they had the strength to do nothing sometimes.

James: And your mother is taking care of your little one right now back at the hotel while you're here. Thanks mom! Love you, mom!

Sarah: She's a great grandma. Not a great grandma -- I mean she is a wonderful grandma.

James: Tough enough to be a grandparent.

I really pray that you give Sarah an opportunity to bless you with a book; I really do pray that. When you go into churches --

(And there's her web site that you see on the screen.)

-- what do you try to communicate to them? Like you stand up in front of an audience, what is going to be the message? What do you want to do if somebody says, "Okay, if you come to our church, what is God going to use you to do for us?" It's nice if they admit they might need something.

Sarah: I think there's a need for us to understand that we don't have to carry it all and that is the message of my book. And at this point in my life, that's what God's teaching me and using me to teach others is that we want to be everything that we can

be and we want to be everything that our loved ones need from us but we are going to fail because we're human and because this is a fallen world and we're not perfect and the world around us isn't perfect. But it's okay because I can hold my son at night and it's a miracle that he's comfortable in my arms. It doesn't escape me that that's a miracle, or my new daughter.

James: How do you pick them up and get them into your lap? How do you work that?

Sarah: Well, I am -- they had me in therapy when I was little but I'm a flunky because they kicked me out because I cheated. They were trying to teach me certain ways to do things, use my hands more and I didn't like it so they would get a phone call and I'd finish up whatever activity was faster and cheat. Walk up and do the thing -- I'm supposed to throw something in a bucket and I would just scoop them up and run up and dump them in bucket and tell them I finished.

[Laughter]

Because we didn't do that or do as much of it as they recommended, my joints are locked in place, curved under, which gives me perfect little hooks to pick up my children. But if the doctors would have had their way and we would have done the right amount of training and stretching, my hands would be straight and I don't know how I would have picked up my children. So I'm glad I was a little bit rebellious as a child.

James: The Lord might have been in that rebellion. Isn't that nice to know that he might be in some of our ways? We have to question sometimes; I think he's definitely been in my determination. When somebody would say, "You can't do that." I'd say, "You watch!" I think there is a certain determination that's good. I think we have to...

Here's one of the things I've discovered in my Christian walk. We have to guard our strengths as much as we guard our weaknesses because a lot of times we're not aware of how our strengths might get us in trouble, and if we'll guard both, our strengths and weaknesses then we'll grow.

You are a blessing.

Do you really love what God's doing in Sarah's life? Do you appreciate her?

You're a tremendous blessing. The book is in the bookstores; you can go online and get it. I'll tell you what we'll do, because I really felt such a drawing to a large number of people watching us today who are grieving.

Betty, they could be grieving for the same reason you and I have had an unbearable, but for God's grace, grief.

I don't know what's going on but I know God wants to hold you like you've seldom been held in the most capable arms. I think the book will bless you. I'll tell you what we'll do, we will send you the book if you just say, "Would you do it, James, I'd like to have it."

Here's what I'm going to ask you to do. I'm going to ask you to reach out and put the arms of God around some little ones that need to be held and that we together can hold. I want you to watch and listen and just see if you think God would want you to take these little ones in your arms -- his arms.

On the mission field

Announcer: Africa is a stunning continent filled with many beautiful sights and sounds.

But sadly, sights and sounds like this occur all too often. Like thousands of others, these children find themselves in a desperate situation. They are severely malnourished, others are on the brink of starvation, most are struggling to stay alive. Soon their sounds of anguish become weaker and weaker and then stop altogether.

This is the sad sound that no mother wants to hear. It is the sound of her child's grave being dug. Her child died simply because she did not have enough food to give them.

But this is the sound of hope: A vitamin enriched soup mix being poured into little orange bowls. This sound brings a promise of life each day. Mission feeding saves lives!

End of clip

In the studio

James: I want you to just kind of think about those three little ones with those three bowls like this, and picking up that soup mix, that porridge. Did you notice the little

child that was lying there on the bed and the skin ulcers on that little emaciated body? I don't know what... I don't know what you see. I see somebody's precious baby.

You know, we actually had some people say, "It would just be better for them to die; then they wouldn't have to live in all that sadness over there." If you knew those people and knew how precious those little children are to them because they don't have any other form of entertainment, they don't have what we call the simple pleasures of life, that is their pleasure, those are the most precious mothers.

And Betty, I'm telling you that we know what it feels like to lose a child. I was already spending a great part of my life trying to help people save their children. I want to save all of the little babies that are in the wombs that would like to have a chance to cry, have a future because I almost didn't. I was almost aborted in my mother's womb but a doctor with convictions wouldn't do it. So I obviously want to save all lives.

Betty, these little children, many of them in South Sudan, that's a nation born because the miracle of God. Recent -- it's a very young... youngest nation and people are plundering them just to disrupt their life, kind of the way things happened here.

Betty: From the moment they're born, James, so many of them they've known nothing but devastation and hunger. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing to demonstrate Jesus' love and offering them hope and life through giving them food that they need? It is a simple solution. We can be a part of that. You and I can; all of us can that are watching, be a part of giving hope and life to these precious children. What greater vision can you see than the last little baby we saw there with the bowl and he puts the food up to his mouth and he gets a little grin on his face? It's better than any gift or toy you can give them -- it's life!

James: I think it puts a smile on the face and heart of God. I really do! So would you go and get your bankcard and use it like a check? That's how you should use them. But go get it and say, "I'm going to give life today."

You can go to LifeToday.org and you can give online. You write a check, make it to *LIFE*. Here's what I want you to know. \$30, \$50, or \$100 we're able to feed three, five, or ten children for several months. Some friends, very caring friends, have put up a \$550,000 matching gift to say, "We will match what you give today." In other words, if you give \$100 to feed ten children it will suddenly feed 20; it will be doubled. You give \$1,000, and some of you can, I believe you will, to help feed 100 children, it will then double to 200; to feed three children with \$30 becomes six; \$50 becomes 10 rather than five.

Would you please go to the phone or go online and make the gift God put on your heart? Let's give those children a bowl. If you want to say, "Well, I want to give them the bowl with the food," tack a dollar on for each child you feed and we'll be able to give them a bowl, that's what they cost. They're heat-resistant; our viewers thought that up.

We'll send you the beautiful teaching material and books by Christine Caine to be a blessing to you. The commemorative bronze, "Brotherly Love," help an older brother feed a younger brother and have something to feed.

Help the missionaries. Please go right now, make the life-giving call. If you need prayer, we're always here to pray with and for you because we care about your broken heart but this is a chance also for us to mend broken lives and heal those little children, give them a future.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished areas of Africa, families are suffering, facing death by starvation, and those hit the hardest are their children.

Life's Mission Feeding program is there able to feed and care for over 400,000 children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. But our food reserves are gone and we desperately need your support to replenish our supplies at more than 800 feeding centers immediately. As an answer to prayer, a group of LIFE's friends have set a \$550,000 end-of-year matching challenge for Mission Feeding. This means your gift today can have a double impact!

\$30 to help three children will be doubled to impact six children! \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save ten children. And \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed and minister to 20 children.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you Christine Caine's powerful new teaching series *Moving Past Your Past*, on audio CD along with her book, *Can I Have and Do It All Please?*

With your double impact gift of \$100 to help save the lives of 20 children you may request both the audio and video series. And as a bonus, we'll send you Christine's latest book release, *Undaunted*.

Finally, please consider a double impact gift of \$1,000 to help save the lives of 200 children. And you may request our 50th anniversary bronze sculpture, "Brotherly Love." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I pray many of you will ask for the commemorative "Brotherly Love" bronze. It's beautiful. Robert Summers is a tremendous artist. You make that special gift and it is not 100 children now, it's 200.

And as I mentioned earlier, if you would like to have Sarah's book, *In Capable Arms*, because that's what you're doing for those children and their families, you're putting capable arms of love around them; it's what God wants to do for you. If you'd like to have her book, we'll be glad to send it to you.

We thank you. We always ask you to give life. When you give life, you live life more fully. You really do!

Would you join us saying thanks to Sarah again?

Sarah, what a blessing you are! Bless those children. Bless mom and dad.

And the book's in the bookstores if you want to get a copy for some friends too.

There's her web site if you want to say, "How about coming and speaking to us sometime?" Take care of her though -- take good care of her.