

12/5/13
Week 49
James and Betty Robison
Matt and Lauren Chandler

James: Well, we welcome you to *LIFE Today*. Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to share with you. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to welcome Matt Chandler back.

Now, Matt was here several years ago. He had been diagnosed with a brain tumor, brain cancer. He really wasn't given much of a chance to live and during that time it was amazing that he and his wife Lauren came in with such hope in the Lord, knowing that God is healer. And Jesus heals. But knowing that something needed to happen inside, regardless of what's going on, that would magnify the Lord. It's been quite a journey.

Recently, he was led to teach the book of Philippians, actually one of my favorites too. The book that he wrote from that series of messages, To Live is Christ; To Die is Gain. I think, probably, for a while he knew what death meant. I think he also was learning through challenging times, what it is to really gain. Well, Matt Chandler and Village Church up in Flower Mound, and his wife Lauren are here. Would you welcome Matt and Lauren back to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

James: Good to see you!

Matt: I've even got some hair this time.

James: Yeah! I want to ask you this: how do you feel?

Matt: I feel great! I really do feel great.

We had received a word from a good friend of mine really even before I got sick, that the Lord was going to take us through a bit of a journey. So really, through all of it, we just kind of done what Paul told Timothy to do which was to hold fast to the prophecies concerning him. So that's what we try to do.

Here we are, almost four years later, two years past our given expiration date and no sign of the tumor, no sign of any cancer, and I feel strong as ever. So, I just really believe the Lord has healed me and –

James: Do you put a stone up out there you go by and visit as it is supposed to be?

Matt: I haven't done that. It's too expensive.

[Laughter]

Matt: But I am – It's good to watch my kids and it's given me a great appreciation for just the spaces in which the Lord lets me play, as a husband and a father and a pastor. Just to be his man and know he's not done with me and he's got more for me to do. So I love that – all those pieces of it.

James: When that person spoke to you about a journey did they imply there were going to be some challenges and trials in that journey? In other words like it wasn't just going to be a journey like going to some great circus moment or something. But --

Matt: I totally misunderstood what he was saying to me when he said it because we were leading the church into some transition that we knew it needed to go through. We knew there were going to be some guys on staff that weren't going to like that and we were probably going to lose some very talented, gifted godly men on staff. So, I was just praying and fasting, going "Okay, Lord. Is this what you'd have us do? I don't mind turning the ship but I don't want people flying off of it while we do it.

So I went to this launch with just a friend of mine who said, "Hey, the Lord has told me that he's going to circumcise you and through that circumcision he's going to make you the father of many sons.

So, I mean I wrote it in my journal and started praying, and just tried to test it. I left that lunch thinking: the Lord wants me to make these changes on how we're structured. So I tried to boldly lead into those and had a seizure and never even got to address those until three years later. But yeah –

So, I had misread it. Really, it was during chemo. I was laying on our bathroom floor in our master bedroom/bath and then I remembered his word and I was going, "Oh my gosh! That's about this! It's not about that!"

So that's when it hit me. I think that's when I started going, "Okay, I think the Lord is going to heal me." And just tried to keep that anchored in my heart, which hasn't always been easy.

Matt: Now, you've watched him go through this and it had to be devastating to you to think, "My husband may be not only facing cancer, I could lose him!" So, what did you see watching this go on him, because you're as big a part of it as anybody on the planet?

Lauren: You know, there were a couple of times, while he was down on chemo that I took the kids by myself to our son's baseball practice, and seeing the dads out there and really just pricked my heart that will this be my future? And just asking the Lord, "If it is, would you supply the grace to sustain me?"

But being on this side of things, and seeing the clear scans and seeing Matt come through has done nothing but cultivate gratitude in both of our hearts for where we've been and where we are and just grateful for each day and grateful what the Lord's done in Matt and that he has kept – that the Lord has kept Matt faithful and has kept him with that testimony, and not changing when it got hard, but still preaching the gospel. And that God is good, even in the pain, even if we're not guaranteed next year. So it's been an honor to watch and be a part of, up close even though it's been painful.

James: It's beautiful in the pain because of the beauty of what God's doing, even in the process of shaping. I don't know – clay doesn't have feelings but we are called clay in the hand of God and when you get squeezed there's a process there, not necessarily always comfortable.

Now, you wrote this book off of a message series on Philippians. Tell us some of the high points and in a brief time we would love for you all to get the book in total, because Matt takes the scripture, and I feel like what he does, he takes biblical truth and brings it into application right now so that it's something that you – it's palatable, it's something you take inside, and it manifests itself very clearly. You see the word and it becomes alive in you.

Tell us some of the high points that you saw in Philippians. And if you have time just to touch on –

Matt: Yeah, I think there are several things that really drew my heart to the book. One is that you see the church born and you see the church of Philippi born in Acts chapter 16 and the makeup of the crowd is what I hope that the makeup of the village looks like. So you –

The first convert we see there in Philippi is Lydia, they fashionista. She's got a house in Thyatira. She's got a house in Philippi. So, here's this dealer of purple cloth, wealthy woman, who's – She's a God-fearer. She's rejected Roman paganism so she's seeking God but not quite sure who God is. So she's studying the Old Testament scriptures, Paul shows up, fills in the gaps and there's our first convert in Philippi.

And then, as that text progresses, then you get the slave girl that's following – here's this oppressed slave girl following Paul around, and then Paul drives the demons out of her.

So now you've got this wealthy fashionista woman with a house in Thyatira and a house in Philippi, and now you've got this little exploited slave girl and man you've got an interesting church right out of the gate.

James: And the demons are manifesting in her.

Matt: Sure! And then you finally watch that supernatural act of Paul being arrested, thrown in prison, God frees him with an earthquake and the prison guard, well we can pick up on this kind of ex-GI prison blue-collar worker guy is that he's a bit of a cruel man because he's not told to torture them, he's not told to put them in the stocks, he's just told to put them in jail. And he puts them in stocks, and he does torture them and Paul's response is to worship and try to convert everybody there and an earthquake frees them. So the duty-bound soldier pulls a sword, gets ready to kill himself, and Paul says, "Put your sword away. We're all here!"

So, then this man's converted, his family's converted. So I just thought if the village church could be made up of influential wealthy people who kind of got the end of that and really wanted to know what was beyond the sun rather than what was under it, and if we could see those who had been exploited and hard-pressed come to know Jesus Christ. And those kind of blue-collared Joes that are experts at Dallas Cowboys but experts at little else,

[Laughter]

if we could watch them to know Christ and watch their passion for sports and being duty-bound give way to a rejoicing in Jesus, I would love to pastor that kind of church.

The second thing is really reading through the book of Philippians, you see, it's really a book about maturation, about maturing in your faith. That was a pain point in my life that the home I grew up in – my daddy was such a dark place. And the Lord saved him. He's actually a member of the church now, which is the sweet grace that God's given me, to see my daddy out there taking notes off sermons that I'm preaching now.

James: He was a tough military guy, wasn't he?

Matt: He was! He was. And you know, he thought he was doing so much better than the generations before him, which he was! It was just – you know – you go a little further back and we're just hanging guys for robbing trains. So, when you're getting better from guys getting hung for armed robbery, there's still some mess there.

And then my mom was a really religious woman but I never really saw a warmth for Jesus in her, or a love for Jesus. So when I came to know Christ I desperately loved him but, man, I had some real – some significant issues because of some abuse that was in my house, some significant wrestles because of things I was permitted to participate in as a kid.

So, I was in a church where everybody just looked like they were doing awesome and I was really struggling so I kept trying to go, okay, what's the silver bullet here? Because I'm coming to church, I'm taking notes, I'm even raising my hands when I'm supposed to. I mean, I'm kind of watching. Now! Okay, get your hand up now! And it was just so slow for me.

And it seemed to me like Christian maturity and sanctification was this six-lane super highway for everyone else and for me it was like a dirt path at the side of Everest and I didn't have any tools. So, to have the apostle Paul swing around in Philippians chapter 3 and say, "No, no, no, no! No! You chase Jesus. And these things are good if they get you more of Jesus but if they don't get you more of Jesus they are rubbish. So, to reset the goal of fill your life with what stirs your affections for Jesus Christ was a total game changer for me because for me, I'm going this is the play book, I've got to do this, I've got to do this, I've got to do this.

And even things that guys were trying to teach me back then just were not helpful. They were like, get up every morning and pray for two hours. Now, that's awesome unless your eighteen and have no idea how to do that. And then I got up and thirteen

minutes late I prayed for everything I know how to pray for and I don't know what to do for the next hour and forty minutes I have before I have to leave for school.

So when the game changed to find what stirs your affections for Jesus Christ and fill your life with them. If anything is robbing you of affections, you put that to death. When that paradigm got laid in front of me, men, I'm walking in so much more freedom. I understood how to defeat sin a bit better. I understood that really knowing Jesus is the best possible solution to any addiction, or shortcoming, or failure that I have.

So, I think the issue for people is – we talk a lot about this at the village – I think people can believe that God forgives them. I think they really struggle with the idea that God likes them. So because they don't believe that God delights in them and loves them, then they get in this game that I was kind of in with my earthly father, where I just wanted to follow his rules and obey him so he wouldn't get mad at me.

So then the relationship with God turns into – not this vibrant beautiful resting in his delight of us that drives out shame, that heals our wombs, and instead becomes, "Let me follow your rules." And well-meaning preachers and well-meaning church leaders do far more drive by guiltings.

Where sanctification is really built out to be – if I can be straight, I'm going to be. It's kind of you need to do it like I'm designed and I've been strengthened to do it. So your relationship with Jesus needs to look like mine.

So if that brother wakes up early and reads Jonathan Edwards, the expectation is that you're going to be waking up early and reading Jonathan Edwards. And if he's a two or three hour "pray in the morning" guy, he's going to put that burden on his people.

So, I think that really understanding, specifically Philippians 3 for me, and even on into 4 where it's – I mean it blows my mind – this guy's handkerchief, and apron are healing people. I'm praying for sick people. He just tells people they're not sick. I mean this guy has got a different level of anointing than what I walk in.

And he says, "Oh, that I might know him." I mean, just so hungry for more of the Lord and so delighted to know him, to the point of sharing in his sufferings. And I'll touch on that quite a bit in the book where our culture is so averse to suffering.

James: He said in – Paul said, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also

bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." And yet he said, "I have joy unspeakable full of glory." This is an amazing paradox but it's actually the Christ walk.

I see a lot of you don't understand me. I'm a happy guy. I've got a wonderful wife. We're happy. We've had 50 years together. We still love – But I have a great burden in my heart. I'm going to show people here in a few moments that they've been plundered and my heart goes out to them. I weep over America. I weep over the church in America that doesn't know the fellowship that Paul's talking about in Philippians. It breaks my heart. I see people going to church and they look like they're going to a funeral. I mean, it's just like they're sitting there like this, petrified, embalmed or something. And I'm saying what is the deal? Let's wake up.

So I have a great burden because I believe God wants to raise the dead and lift us. I have a compassion, at the same time I have a joy unspeakable, full of glory. See, that is the amazing thing about what I see you going through. And you want the whole church to go through it. And you said I'm kind of on a reef, you know, get the course corrected for the ship of the church.

I weep over the direction of the church really going into the fullness of the God's purpose, kingdom now, living as though he's in charge because he is, not waiting for the reward out there, some future place. Get with it now.

And then I have a burden for him to correct the catastrophic course of the nation. I weep over a nation that's headed, literally, to disastrous consequences for forgetting God, mocking God. Is there something wrong with me because I have a broken heart? Or is there maybe something right with me because of that?

Matt: I would say there is something very right with being burdened and being heart-broken and wanting more. I mean if the God that I read about in scriptures is the God that I worship, then there should always be in me a type of holy discontentment. Not sinful discontentment, the things I'm owed more, but a type of godly discontentment where I'm with the prophet Isaiah. He said, "Oh, rim the heavens and come down, that the mountains might shake." And really plead for him to do in our day what he's done throughout history. And so I'm more worried about people who don't want that. I'm wondering, are we reading the same book? I mean do you –

James: They just want to get out of here like an escape hatch.

Betty: Well, a lot of times it's more about the expectations of man and what they put on us and expecting – what does God expect of me? What does he want me to do . And it's okay t be different. Sometimes we forget that God made all – we're all different. And to allow God to let us grow in the gifts that he's given us but yet we can all come together as one, worshipping the same God and appreciate the difference of the one sitting next to us and know that God created them. But not just like us!

James: Didn't God do good giving us these two beautiful girls? He's God. You see, is God great or what? Folks? Do you like what Matt's go to say? And Betty and Lauren?

Matt, I really pray that people will get the book. It's in the bookstores. The Village Church: it would be a wonderful place to visit. But not if you don't want your course corrected a little bit with love. I mean, really with love, no an old religious stick. Not that kind of a deal. Not a rule keeping situation. Not a regiment but a way of life, transforming work of God. And he doesn't have them all at once. We could kind of wished we all get there overnight. We don't. And nobody knew it better than Paul.

I guess he's the greatest example of a man in Christ and Christ in a man that ever lived. But the truth is he's just supposed to be an example and inspires us to go there too. He's an example of what Christ could be in us and what we can be in Christ.

If you would like to have Matt Chandler's book, *To Live is Christ, To Die is Gain*, just ask for it.

Matt, I mentioned a while ago that we're going to show our viewers something I think they're going to want to have a whole lot to do with. This is really very touching.

I've been there when we had to detect for mines, to try to keep from getting blown up, when we literally slept in a hut or a tent; where the people are being bombed in the very places we went to take care of children in a medical clinic. The medical clinic was bombed three times by the enemy.

And now, in this area, rebels are coming in just destroying villages to disrupt the youngest nation in the world, it's really been born because of faith, South Sudan. I want you to look in right now, and say, "God! How can we go in with you as your representative?"

On the mission field

Announcer: Everything is gone... only ashes remain. Rebels... in the night they came setting fire to homes and killing many. Most who fled survived... but for how long?

Subtitle:

>> We stayed in the woods for 2 weeks. When we came back everything was burnt. All we have are the clothes we are wearing.

Announcer: So they now live beneath the trees, the roof over her head isn't Rebecca's greatest concern. It is their food supply. All their food storage went up in flames and it's created a crisis in this village.

Subtitle:

>> We are living with no food. My children are suffering.

Announcer: But her children aren't the only ones. Rebecca too suffers but mostly because the only food she can gather will not sustain them and makes them sick.

Subtitle:

>> When we cook the leaves, the children will not eat because it hurts their stomachs and they are crying.

Announcer: Rebecca and her children survived the cruelty that night but the food crisis they now face is often harder to escape. And it's a story that can be told 1,000 times across Africa. A shortage becomes a crisis. Hunger turns to starvation, and malnutrition sinks in its teeth. But with your help today, we could begin to reverse it.
End of clip

In the studio

James: That's my prayer. Honey, when you look at that and you see those beautiful children, you know the crisis -- what goes on inside of you in your heart?

Betty: I listened to a mother, her heart must be broken because there's nothing any dearer to a mother's heart than her children, and to care for them; it's natural for the mother to want to care for them. She wants to be able to give them the food they need but she has no resource to call upon. We need to be that resource to reach out and join with the heart of that mother to help her children. I hope you will help us.

James: We've been working now for over 20 years to literally rescue the perishing. We've watched that nation born, really in result of missionaries many years ago who went there and led those people to Christ. When we first went there with Franklin Graham, and we landed on a dirt strip and the children and their families were singing praises.

Franklin told us on the way, I'm going to show you New Testament Christians. I'm going to show you some Christians like the Christians in the book of Acts. And boy, you talk about a line of resistance to the radical Islamic belief, and to the terrible plundering that was going on, there it is. It is a beautiful line that is drawn by faith.

Those precious people there now need so much our help. We've been there for years distributing food. The missionaries won't leave; they'll risk their lives to be in the pit of hell, literally, where angels fear to tread, so to speak and yet they are there.

And then all over Africa where there's the areas of pain. Betty, we're there to save their lives in crisis, to stabilize them and show them how to work. We do not teach them to be dependent. We teach them to learn how to go forward.

And I'm telling you, really, the people who want to develop the resources there need to go with the idea -- I wish our business people would say, "We'll go over there and help them if you'd focus on helping the people and developing and giving them the jobs." That's my prayer that will happen.

We feed at the schools once they get stabilized so we can get them going to get a trade. Would you help us help those precious families? Would you help us take care of the hundreds of thousands of children right now, and their families that we've got in feeding centers? For the next several months, if you'll make a gift, we'll be able to take care of those children.

We come to you twice a year and ask for your help: \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next several months. Could you help us care for three, five, or ten? \$1,000 we can care for 100 children for the next months. It's not total childcare, it's emergency crisis feeding and stabilizing the situation, then feeding them on a regular basis in schools once they get stabilized.

You know what's happened? We have some friends that care so deeply they said, "We'll match the gift the viewers give today." If they give \$30 or \$50 or \$100, it will double. And rather than just help three children they'll help six, rather than five it will

be ten, rather than ten children it will be 20. If you can give \$1,000, you are now helping 200.

Father, I pray everyone watching would do their part sharing your heart; in Jesus' name I pray.

Would you get your bankcard right now; please? Dial the number, take that card and say here's the gift God's leading me to make and it will be doubled -- it will be doubled in the outreach. You'll reach twice as many children. You can go to LifeToday.org and make the gift online.

Remember we're sending Christine Caine's teaching *Moving Past Your Past*, books that she has written that will be a tremendous blessing. We want to invest in you to help you grow while you're reaching out to touch people with the love of God and to give them a chance. Thank you for making that love gift. Thank you for sharing life.

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

On the mission field

Peter Pretorius: You know, these children should be running around playing, having fun. But that is being robbed from them because they are without food, they are without hope, they are struggling.

And I ask if you could help us to give these children hope by giving them a bowl of food a day. It's amazing how that bowl of food everyday adds hope to a child and changes their situation.

We can make the difference. We can give them hope. We can give them a bowl of food. We need your help and we need it now!

End of clip

In the studio

James: I also want to mention as I say thank you for your help, if you would like to have Matt Chandler's book, *To Live is Christ, To Die is Gain*, just ask for it. You help us help those children and their families, and Matt I think you and Village Church, you've been working some in South Sudan, haven't you?

Matt: Yeah! Several years now.

James: Aren't they beautiful people?

Matt: They really are!

James: Isn't it a miracle, the faith that's there. When some of them talk about missionaries like they were just there, and yet they were there years ago, and won their family to Christ. It's a great work.

Listen, we appreciate you!

Would you say thanks to Matt and Lauren? And thanks be to God! His journey, Village church! Visit them sometime. There's their website if you want to check them out. We put the website up to check them out. Go see them, you won't be sorry!

Thanks for watching! Thanks for helping us share life!