

12/17/13
Week 51
James and Betty Robison
Pastor Jack Graham

James: You make us feel so welcome. Thank you! I'm James Robison. My wife Betty and I welcome you to LIFE Today. Jack Graham is pastor of Prestonwood Church. That's one of the greatest churches in the whole earth. They do, without a doubt, have one of the greatest choirs this side of heaven, because it's full of heaven. And Jack's quite a preacher. His associates, his staff are a continual source of inspiration and the family of faith that meets there, they're a tremendous blessing.

Jack has written a book that I'm thrilled to see because he's titled it *Unseen* and the realm he deals with is so unseen that tragically it's been too often ignored because the one who is the great deceiver doesn't even want you to perceive his reality, much less the damaging effect of his deception.

The back cover has this statement: Behind every win and every loss, beneath every success and every failure, spiritual forces are at work.

Years ago, Betty, we really discovered the power of that invisible realm and the spiritual darkness and deception. But the enemy was real, that Satan although is one being, he has many agents that quite active. The thing a lot of people didn't seem to realize is that Satan and his dominions and minions have literally focused their fury against the family of faith, against Christians.

Angels, Satan, heaven, and hell and winning the battle for eternity. Winning it, not losing it, not letting the gates of hell prevail. Jack Graham has discovered something, uncovered something the enemy keeps hidden and has shared it beautifully; the reality of spiritual warfare and winning the battle. Welcome Jack Graham to LIFE Today.

Jack: Great to see you!

James: Don't you think that part of the craftiness of Satan is to either getting not to be recognized or to be ignored? Isn't that part of his tactics?

Jack: Sure! Or to be minimized in some way. He's a caricature. People think the devil is someone in a Halloween costume, or a medieval creature or someone with pitchfork

and horns, shoveling coal down in hell, or making others shovel coal. And you know, Hollywood has picked up on some of the extremes of this, and just in the media, I don't know if you've noticed or not, but just the increasing darkness of movies and media of all kinds, and interest in the dark side and the supernatural.

Of course, what so often is portrayed as supernatural is just superficial or superficial and superstitious. And it's not real. But there is a real enemy and there are real forces at work. The devil is not in hell, again, shoveling coal. He's like a roaring lion roaming the earth seeking whom he may devour and the apostle Paul, the scripture clearly warns us, we don't have to wonder that he exists. The Bible is clear on this and we know it from personal experience as well, that there are forces of evil in the world that mean to do us harm and the apostle Paul said, "Don't be ignorant of the strategies of the devil." And yet, there is so much ignorance and, frankly, so much foolishness regarding spiritual matters in the supernatural.

And so, what I try to do in this book is to bring to bear the scriptures and just exactly from God's perspective, how he has revealed himself and uncovered the works of the enemy. And then he's given us victory in Christ. This book is really about spiritual warfare and winning the battle for eternity.

Betty: To me, the sad thing is even though, like you said, our world has become more aware that there's demonic forces out there, they don't really realize that God can set us free from those strongholds in our life. It's like we just live around it; we just accept it.

Jack: Exactly! And I know, growing up – I grew up in a Baptist church and we had wonderful pastors and leaders and we heard about the devil, but I'd never come face to face with the reality of evil. I mean, seeing the face of evil to an experience of my own life when I was twenty years of age and I was a student at a Baptist university preparing to preach. I was already preaching and playing baseball, college baseball and having a great life.

I grew up in an ideally home, a Christian home. My dad was my hero. He was working at a hardware store in Fort Worth, Texas and a man came in to steal something and ends up with this man with a hammer in his hand and bludgeons my father. My dad never regained consciousness, he lived for ten days. And like many families, we lived there at that hospital and we'd go into the ICU to see him and just pray that he would live.

Again, he never regained consciousness and I remember the night that he died, I slipped off into the little chapel of that hospital, and I'm always grateful for those little chapels in hospitals that still exist today in many places. I got there, I was alone, somehow I ended up staying late and God met me in that room at a very deep level, one that I can't even describe, the reality of Jesus. As a 20 year old preacher I certainly needed that.

But what I really learned was that I was facing an enemy that I wasn't aware was so strong. It really forged me as a young man, as a young minister and pastor, to do battle. It was almost like – I wasn't trying to be arrogant, but it was like I wanted to say, "Okay, Satan, we're going to war now. And I've got the advantage because I know Jesus."

I didn't know a lot about spiritual warfare but when I was a little boy there was a bishop on television, you may remember him, Fulton J. Sheen. He was one of the first television preachers and he was a Catholic bishop. Now, a little Baptist boy shouldn't be watching Catholics on television, right? So I had to slip off to do it and – but I was always fascinated by his robes and all of that, but what really captured me as a little boy was the opening to that show, because these were the early days. You know, I was watching it on our 1954 Philco black and white. So it was very, very primitive. But there was a dark screen and then a hand appears, and you may remember this, strikes a match, and then lights a candle. And then the voiceover, it sounded pretty creepy to me as a little kid, but the voiceover said, "Betty to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

Somehow, even as a little boy, that stuck in my heart and in my mind. So, I had to decide on the death of my father, the brutal murder of my father – I mean, this is something you think happens to somebody else. You see it on the news. Now, we're the victims of a terribly brutal and violent crime. My dad and I loved – he was my hero. You think your dad is indestructible. I thought he was, and now he's gone. My mother is devastated. We're all devastated. So we're facing evil and so I could shake my fist at the darkness and rant, even at God, or I could light the night. I could take as my life mission, the message of light in Jesus Christ. What does the scripture say, we overcome evil with good. So we don't overcome the devil by shouting at the devil or shouting at the darkness, or even preaching at it sometimes. The only thing you need for darkness is the absence of light. What we need to do, you don't dark the darkness, you light the night. So, that's what we're called to do and that's what I spent my life doing.

James: Well, you have, and you've done it effectively. Jack, that was a horrible beginning and a revelation of just how ugly, how damaging deadly, destructive evil is. You saw it in all of its manifest demonstration of death and pain.

Jack: He comes to kill, steal, and destroy.

James: And you saw it, firsthand. And you knew that was evil personified. And I hear you saying to the church, this is not God's plan. We don't have to be defeated by this unseen realm of darkness and deception and defeat. We can come out and win. I mean, to me you sounded a very clear note on that trumpet, not only warning but a charge to win because the victory is ours.

Jack: There is nothing in defeat for the believer of the Bible. We have the sure confidence, and the sure hope that Christ, at the cross, by the resurrection, has won the battle. There's an old spiritual axiom that says, "We don't fight for victory. We fight from victory." And so we take our stand in Christ and our identity is in him so we have strength for every battle.

But Satan attacks in different ways. That's what many Christians are not alert to. That's why there's so much brokenness, even in the family of God, there's so much brokenness because people are beaten down by the power of the enemy. And we don't realize we have an appropriated, applied the victory that is ours in Christ. Paul talks in Ephesians 6 about the armor of God and I have a chapter in that book about how to gear up and fight spiritual battles. But ultimately the battle is prayer. The warfare is prayer. Because that's where the battle is won and lost. Any failure in my life, ultimately, is a prayer failure. Any victory, success in my life is ultimately a prayer victory. Either my prayers or someone praying for me.

James: You know, I think we've got to realize that if we really pray, if you're really talking to God, you're talking to someone. He likes to talk too. And when we bear our heart I think he likes to share his heart. I feel like a lot of people go into the prayer closet with some kind of a Dewey mission, rather than a real intercession with God, and real communion with God, where he downloads some of his heart, and some of our responsibility, and the commission of Christ. And then sends us out to pierce the darkness. We've kind of settled in to a little comfort zone, but while I've gotten my little comfort and we don't seem to cause the enemy much discomfort. I think, to me, I hear you sounding a charge. I've been talking about the necessity what Paul emphasized about wake up! Put on the armor of light. I hear you sounding that. I'll be honest with you, Jack. I've been in the ministry for 50 years and you've been a few years behind me, as far as how long you've been in ministry, but we've been doing the

same thing, and we've been co-laborers and we've been lifting one another up. But I see too many pastors and priests who seem like they're just kind of comforting the people in that safe zone, rather than getting out on the battle front and taking on the enemy and winning.

Jack: Exactly! And I believe that very strongly. And spiritual battle is a necessity. We are in the battle. There's no question about that. It's just whether you are winning and using the warfare weaponry that the armor and the spiritual weapons, the word of God, pulling down strongholds, not by human weapons but by God's weapons that he gives us. Yeah, people want to play it safe. People look around today and I think they're concerned that, well, we've already lost. Let's just buy our ascension robes and wait until Jesus comes and we'll all go to heaven. But for the sake –

James: That's a lousy way. That is such a bad way –

Betty: And when we do that we give the enemy ground.

Jack: Yeah! And God has called us to engage the enemy in the name and the power of Jesus Christ. He's promised us victory. Life isn't a playground. It's a battleground. And the good news is that when we face the enemy, when we go face-to-face with spiritual weapons we win every time. God has given us always victory in Jesus Christ.

James: You and I are sports fans. Betty is a big sports fan. You know what? It seems to me like the people get more upset about the Cowboys defense not holding up than they do the defenses of God against the enemy.

[Laughter]

We don't seem to be very disturbed about that. You've touched something in the book I think is really important. I think that we in the church find it very difficult to open up about where we really are. It's like, talk about fear, we're scared of each other. We don't dare want church folks know what kind of battle we've had or that we've lost or we failed or that we're going through something and we're going to need some help. Well, you had something come on you that you kept a secret and you didn't want to share it. And then the Lord pressed upon you to share it and you realized it was important. What was that?

Jack: Well, in 2009 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. A regular physical examination. And men, make sure you're getting your PSA checked because it's very important. Prostate cancer is very curable if you catch it early. And we caught it early,

thank goodness. So, in my view, once it was diagnosed and I decided I was going to do surgery and had the best surgeon I knew anything about to do it, Dr. Cooper, from the Cooper Clinic, guided me through this.

So my idea was, we were thinking about it as a family, we said, let's don't make a big deal of this. I don't want to frighten the church. Well, the pastor has cancer. And little kids hear about it. And I don't want the family exposed to everybody asking, "Well, how's he doing?" So we just decided to keep it a secret.

Now, we had a prayer team around us. I don't want to suggest we didn't pray because we did pray. And we had a small group that knew. But we made a decision not to tell the church, not to put the church through it. I actually went in under an assumed name in the hospital. I didn't want the press to get on this in some way in Dallas. So, I go in and I'm up preaching eleven days later and I'm thinking, done! And a few weeks later I realized I was not done. I was feeling very bad, very weak, to the degree that I ended up having to take two months off to get well. And it really took me longer than that to get well and I went through a really tough time just battling the whole idea of cancer, just the emotional battle that you go through. If anyone's diagnosed with cancer you know what I'm talking about. When you see, when it did splash in the newspaper, when you see your name there and "cancer" in the headline, that takes you back. And it really took me down. I came to the most physically and emotionally weakest state of my life. I say in the book, because I'm talking about the way you think and how you think because the battle is often in the mind, infected, it's always in the mind for the believer.

I allowed Satan to use fear to attack me, and I've always wondered if had the whole church praying, if I had just opened up and really got it out there, instead of trying to be Superman, and go in and get surgery and then show back up and preach like nothing had ever happened, that maybe my outcome would have been different. I don't know. I needed what happened to me during that time, some of the – There were times I was crawling into the pulpit, didn't know if I could make it.

One time I didn't make it through. I mean, you're talking about a guy that never had a cold. I give colds, I don't get colds. All right? And I had never been sick. So that was part of my problem is this I didn't know what being sick was like.

But, you know, it's made me a better pastor to people and more understanding when people go through physical and emotional pain. So God took me to the woodshed for about a year there and certainly I got God's people praying for me. But the point that I'm making here is that that was failure in my life at some level and because there

wasn't prayer. And prayer wins victories in our lives. It's more than just saying words to God or pronouncing words and prayers but pouring your heart out to God and yes, listening. I heard from God during that time and season in my life more than most anytime in my life, for sure!

James: Probably got a lot of this book –

Jack: No doubt about it! No doubt about it.

James: Let me just recommend that you go, go online, go to the bookstores and get it, and get in it, and get the truth. Because Jack has really opened up. In some ways he's walked where angels fear to tread because a lot of church leaders say, "Stay away from that! Stay away from that!" It's like they're scared of the devil. Like if we don't expose him, he'll leave us alone. That's nonsense. That's the devil right there talking and talking through you. Now you're preaching devil. That's not good. So, don't do that. Read it, and get it.

Jack, I'm praying that God will give us a supernatural awakening that we so desperately need.

Jack: That's what I pray for.

James: First in the church and then nationally.

Would you say thanks to Jack Graham for not only sharing his heart but really, really, for sharing God's truth? Because this is God's truth. I'm going to tell you, I have not discovered this. When Betty and I had discovered it and had not seen how these warring spirits were literally jerking us around. Like they had a wooden gun in our ribs and they were arresting us. Even thought they were shooting blanks, so to speak, they had deceived us and they were defeating us. I'm telling you, it was the most liberating thing when we saw the reality of the spiritual realm, the invisible world, and this will help you do it.

Jack, you know, because you are a mission-minded pastor, you know how effective missions are. You know how effective missions are when you put a love-filled missionary in the midst of pain, there's a revelation of God. And you've always heard a picture says more than a thousand words. Actions speak louder than words. You're going to see something, right now, that's going to reveal that about as clearly as anything you have ever looked at. And then it's going to be our responsibility to simply say something much louder than words. Watch this!

Subtitle:

>> A picture is worth a thousand words.

Subtitle:

>> Action speaks louder than words. Mission Feeding saves lives. It's yours to give.

James: Boy, I don't ever want to reach a time in my life that those images don't move me beyond my ability to even adequately describe. Betty, my mind is just racing back over those little images. That little boy that was just covered with that skin that's just – that old skin disease, like the skin is rotting off his little emaciated body.

I can't even tell you, because I've done it so many times and so many places how much I wanted to just pick up that little boy and fix him. And love that never fails is what fixes it. All he needs is some nourishment. And there was a little child there so weak and reached out and took somebody's hand and I thought boy, I would like to be that hand.

I don't know what you see when you see Jesus on the cross, his hands extended. But I do see him saying, "I love you this much." And I see him extending his hands, nail pierced for me, to my hurt, all the pain. I find him as the one person who never looks beyond my need. He never looks beyond my pain. He sees both and he meets it.

Betty, we can help those children. We saw the missionary handing that little bowl. We're the ones that provide the bowls and we put the food in it for the missionaries and relief workers.

Betty: And something that really stuck in my heart as I was watching along with you was at the end, the statement said, Mission Feeding saves lives. It's yours to give. We have it right here, in our hearts, in our hands, the opportunity to save the lives of these precious children. They don't have a chance, many of them, if we don't reach out and love them and give them hope.

James: And I believe with all of my heart in this season of giving, God gave his great gift to us, the gift of life. The life that we fully experience by freely sharing it. I believe

you're going to do it. This is the last week now, that we're going to have this opportunity. We need to hear from everyone of you. Some of you have already made a gift. Betty and I have. We're going to give again. Betty and I always give the largest gift we can possibly give at the end of the year. We know that we need to take advantage of year-end giving and take advantage of the blessing that we're allowed to have to have that credit, which anything you can get from the government you can call a blessing. You just need to thank God for it! So you can make that gift.

We pray that you'll make the greatest year-end gift you've ever made. Here's the beauty, it'll be doubled! We've got a group of friends that said they'll match everything you give. Which means \$100 normally we're able literally to feed ten children; now we can feed twenty. \$1000, we can feed 100 children; now will go to 200. So whatever you do, it's effect just double the number. \$30, \$50, or \$100; 3, 5, or 10 children suddenly becomes 6, 10, or 20. It's doubled! Because somebody says I believe so much in the program and mission outreaches, we'll match your gift.

Would you go to the phone right now and take your bankcard and use it like a check? That's how you always use it, like a check. Or you can go online, lifetoday.org and say I want to make a gift today. If you write a check make it to LIFE, but call us please! Let us know you're mailing it because this is the last week. We really need to hear from you and we need to let the missionaries know we are going to be there. You're not going to be empty handed. We know your heart's full. You're going to have the where withal to meet the needs of those children.

Would you make that call? Please do! By the way, if you get a busy you be persistent. You be determined! No one is going to stop me from helping. My actions are going to speak a whole lot louder than any words. Would you do it? Thank you so much for making that call. Thanks for giving 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:

Beth: Betty, I remember you saying so clearly and so many times to me and so many times on the program that you were just living and praying to see the day that the line to help was longer than the line to feed. That has not happened as of today because we have run out of food and left some children without. My heart is just broken so I've experienced what you have experienced a number of times and never want to see happen again. So we're still praying toward that and we're still working toward that end.

We've got to be able to partner and give so that we can see that line become a reality, where there are more helping than there are to feed. That could become a reality but it is not yet a reality.

Please go to the phone right now, if you would. Just feel the prompting of God to act on what you seen and act on what you've heard. I'm going to join you doing exactly that.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I want to encourage you, again, the last week! Get Brotherly Love! This older brother with one of our bowls feeding his little brother the food that love provided. Robert Summers, the great sculptor, did this sculpt. He did this bronze to say thank

you for doing this. And we'll send it to you if you make that special gift of \$1000 or more, some of you do more than that, and knowing it will be doubled I hope you will do it.

I want to mention again, because it's very important, Jack Graham is a friend, he's a co-laborer, he's a warrior, he's a soldier, he's an ambassador for Christ; courageous! He's a helper and an inspiration to me and everybody and in one of the greatest churches on earth. This book is a gift from God through this pastor to you and to the church. Winning in this unseen realm, that controls what's happening; either light or darkness, truth or deception, we're here to win.

Jack, thank you.

Would you say thanks to Jack Graham? Appreciate you, buddy. Go online, get the book. Visit Prestonwood sometime. You'll be glad that you did!