

1/28/14
Week 5: Water for Life
James and Betty Robison
John and Stasi Eldredge

James: Hey! Hey! Way back here! -- All over the place. Hey! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to get to share this time with you.

John Eldredge is here. He wrote *Wild at Heart*; you know most guys are. It was a really, really neat book. The things he talked about in there. I can't believe he wrote all that stuff in a book! He did and got away with it.

[Laughter]

You know what? People appreciated it because he just told the truth about boys. Girls and ladies said, "I wish somebody would tell truth." And the boys needed to hear it, and realized there is nothing sick about being a boy, a man, and understanding wild at heart and only God can deal with that appropriately.

Well, John's got another book. He comes up with some incredible titles. He must just kind of float around in the mountains of Colorado.

[Laughter]

But he wrote a book. He's a New York time's best-selling author but he wrote a book, *The Utter Relief of Holiness*. It kind of jolts you. You think smug, pious, stiff! It's kind of spooky isn't it? It will make you want to go blehh! That kind of stuff bothers God. "How God's goodness frees us from everything that plagues us," including a misunderstanding of holiness because if God's holy, there is nothing spooky about it. It's beautiful and attractive -- it's magnetic.

His wife Stasi is with us too. She understands that. They both understand one another's journey because they're on it together and they get to watch it. Let's find out about the relief of holiness. Welcome John Eldredge and his wife Stasi to *LIFE Today*.

John, good to see you, buddy.

Stasi, good to see you!

Stasi: Thank you.

John: Good to see you too.

James: I like your boots, Stasi. I just noticed that.

Stasi: They've got a heart.

James: Those are Colorado boots, these are Texas boots.

Stasi: They're more shiny.

James: Yeah, you kick the cow, I kick the lizard.

[Laughter]

Listen, John. Did you get this picture of this holy... it's kind of spooky. And you talk about it being a relief, man. How do you see it?

John: Just the captivating goodness of Jesus. Like what you see in his character. We've done the same thing to holiness that we did to Jesus. We made it religious, we made it creepy, we made it totally unattractive. And yet... and yet it's pretty central to the theme of scripture -- pretty central.

Sermon on the Mount; Jesus is like a Copernican Revolution in their thinking of holiness. They had all these external rules and that sort of thing. Jesus takes it to the heart and he actually makes it deeper, truer. So he cares about it. He cares about our character. He cares about the quality of our lives.

But then you look at how people responded to him and they didn't see him as severe, harsh; right? Some of the most unholy people, the tax collectors, the prostitutes, the political revolutionaries, the thief hanging on the cross, they were captivated by the beauty of his goodness.

James: They were overwhelmed by his holiness in a way that it had a magnetic effect, not repulsive -- they didn't repel. He said, "If I'm lifted up..." And he is holy, holy, holy. When you really see him you may fall before him in awe of the greatness and the grace and beauty and power. And you may feel what you need to feel about the great

need for whatever you see in him being in your own life when you may realize it is not there but there's a magnetic attraction. He said, "If I'm lifted up, I draw men to myself." And he is holy. So you're trying to communicate that this holiness, it's a lot like grace. It is not a bunch of effort and a bunch of rules and regulations but it's liberating. It frees us and you're calling it relief.

John: Utter relief.

James: What kind of relief were you... you seem like you need it.

[Laughter]

Were you ever trapped or did you just see this ugliness of a misunderstanding of God and holiness that just kind of was repulsive to you or did it have you for a while? Or did you just see it on others?

John: I've heard people struggle with things.

[Laughter]

James: Do you ever struggle with anything? Stasi, has he ever struggled with anything?

Stasi: Of course, he has. We're human beings!

James: Do you see when he gets this relief stuff that he's talking about; do you see it in him? Like he's all excited and you see this is good?

Stasi: Oh, absolutely! -- The relief of not having to struggle with things that we've struggled with all of our life. Explain that part. That's really good!

John: In Ephesians one, the promise is this. It says God wants to make you whole and holy by his love. And what's happened, kind of in the church, is that we have these two camps and there's the wholeness, it's kind of therapeutic Christianity and frankly, my books kind of fall in that camp; people chasing restoration and freedom from addictions and the healing of their masculinity or femininity. And then you have the other camp which is righteousness and moral standards and a return to the values of our fathers.

James: You can say it with fire because Jesus spoke with fire but there's love in the fire. Somehow it's just there.

John: You can't get to wholeness and restoration without the healing of your character, without holiness. And you can't get to holiness without wholeness. The two go together. It just breaks my heart to see people chasing like just a moral Christianity and it doesn't bring relief.

James: It's just like they get more sophisticated pens, cages to try to keep everything under control and the word may be carried around in this little binder to church but it is not bound up inside of them with liberating power, which I see as wholeness. I see this incredible freedom that comes in Jesus. It's like grace. People say, "There's grace in works." No grace works. Grace works in us. Grace works love in us. Grace works holiness in us. Grace really works. It doesn't make us lawless. It fills us full of the ability to live because of what Jesus has done to impart it to us and that includes holiness.

John: Impart it. Not just some sort of categorical "you're forgiven; you have the holiness of God," but literally give you his own character. I was a pretty serious substance abuser before I came to Christ; got kicked out of high school. I'm kind of one of the radical stories.

James: Were you a church kid doing this stuff?

John: No, no, no! No knowledge of God, no understanding of Christianity.

James: Where were you living then?

John: Grew up in a total pagan... Los Angeles.

James: City of angels. Go ahead.

John: So here's the beautiful story. My conversion to Christ is fairly radical. It was the talk of the town. I was walking down the street about six weeks later and laying in front... just walking on the sidewalk, laying in front of me on the sidewalk is a bag of drugs. Now, seven weeks ago that would have been like...

James: You trying to tell me you just left it there?

John: Here's the beautiful story. I looked down and I laughed out loud. I laughed and I picked it up and I dusted it to the wind. That's The Utter Relief of Holiness. It's relief to be set free of the things that plague you.

James: You were amazed by it; weren't you? That it happened!

John: I laughed. I laughed because the transformation that the New Testament promises is available. I just want to buy every billboard I can in the country and just say the transformation is available if you will let Jesus give you his character, his holiness, the transformation.

Betty: This wholeness that you're talking about and this holiness is not something you work up in yourself. You're saying it's God in us and God being himself through us. And it is something we don't have to strive for. We don't have to convince somebody that we're holy.

James: You tried to do that; didn't you?

Betty: I did. I was a good little church girl.

James: I tease you. She is the original church lady.

[Laughter]

She just did everything right for all the wrong reasons.

Betty: Trying to have that appearance of holiness.

John: But that's what brought the fear -- your struggle of fear; right? Exactly. It was horrible. It was nothing like relief. It was the opposite.

Betty: Absolutely!

James: So you keep discovering these things, these new things that excite you. This is something... what has this done for you, the insight that you've got? Because you can look back on it and say that's what was happening, and I don't think people understand this. So how is it affecting you now in this walk because you've already written about some of the great things that are happening but here's something else that's new that's happening. How has that played out in your life now? What do you

see it? Is it something you just share with others as an insight and now you pass it on? Or is it having more effect on you like when you didn't take those drugs and you just threw them to the wind, so to speak.

John: So much more a fact. James, you know what this is like. You know what this is like to be a public celebrity. You know what it is like to have a lot of people adore you, to be in the spotlight, to have power and influence and fame -- and the money that goes with that. That's dangerous stuff. I mean cocaine...

James: Success is a tremendous test.

John: Cocaine is nothing compared to this. And to be able to try and walk... to live in a genuine trueness, this is what we desperately need. We need a genuine trueness to our lives. You see Jesus do it. He has single women who are sexually available throw themselves at his feet -- and he's good; like he just loves them. His ability to have relationships with single women, they're absolutely just loving and full of integrity. That's phenomenal!

Like, don't you crave that? I want that. I want to be able to live with what God has given you and I to live with by way of influence and that sort of thing with absolute integrity. So yeah! This matters. This matters huge to me.

James: Wow! I think that the beautiful thing about holiness, and I think in our spiritual life we do continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, and we're becoming more deeply rooted and grounded in love. I think that one of the things I've noticed in my journey is that the times, the in-season and out-of-season, the fruitful season, but there's also the deepening seasons of our life when our root system is to be driven down. Even in a drought roots go deeper. If they go deeper, you're more deeply rooted; you can hold the fruit because you can contain the fruit that comes. So if we would see everything that is happening in our life as an opportunity for us to grow, no matter what it is.

Now I want you to know that I see that as holiness because that is godlikeness and totally depending upon him, which is the way Jesus moved. He said, "I don't do anything I don't see the father doing. I don't move, I don't go 'til I see where he is looking. I'm literally looking for him to directly my steps." I really believe that more than people understand we can live that way. We can have that kind of a relationship with God.

Now I've got to be honest with you, I see that as holiness and see it as very non-religious. People who are so stilted and so much sausage or so much bologna and they're just all stuffed in there and they all look the same -- the more people look the same the less they look like God. That's not holiness. That's just copying each other. It's imitating each other. It is not pretty. It doesn't look good!

John: It's the fear of man that Betty was talking about earlier.

Betty: Of the expectations of man.

John: It really is. We're taking our cues from one another and we're not bringing the life and the freedom that people were meant to enjoy in this. Let me make it really simple -- really simple! There's a new prayer I pray now when I wake up in the morning. As soon as my eyes open, as soon as I am beginning to kind of come back into the day, before I get out of bed, before I do anything else, my prayer is: Jesus in me live this day. Jesus in me... It's not grit my teeth, gut it out; it is not force myself to be nice to everybody today, force myself to be forgiving. It is Jesus in me, live this day. Then as I'm walking into different things, as I'm picking up the phone and I know that this is going to be a tough conversation, Jesus in me, come into this call.

James: You can live excited being carried by that power and that presence to where every moment you live amazed. When a situation shows up we should be amazed at who shows up at the door representing us, us representing him. We ought to be carried by the spirit. That's what really walking in the spirit is. It's not boasting about some gift, not just operating in a gift, it's walking in the fruit of the spirit, the love and the joy and the peace -- and it is not pretense. It is not put on; is it, Betty? And it becomes an overflow.

Betty: No, and it's not wow, I finally arrived. I'm holy now. I finally arrived. I got it! It's a day-by-day walk of holiness.

John: It's not primarily what you're not doing. Well, I don't dance anymore. I don't drink anymore. And I don't smoke anymore. It's actually primarily what you are doing.

James: Betty got holy and she danced all the way across the platform worshipping God. She is standing up in front of about 12,000 people and the Lord said, "You will dance for me." And she said, "Lord, I'm a Baptist Christian!"

John: This is a true story.

Stasi: This is a true story. I love this!

James: You will dance for me. And she starts dancing across the platform worshipping God.

John: Come on, I love this story!

James: You know what happened? People just began to get on their faces before God.

Betty: Well, there has to be an abandonment too.

James: David did that. People were criticizing. There is seductive dancing, there is dancing that is not healthy but the point is liberation is what I hear you talking about in holiness. Is that what you saw with him being excited about this, Stasi, when you were watching?

Stasi: Oh, just freedom. I live with this man and it's all true. What you see is what you get in his journey into trueness and passionate love for Jesus. And then you're passionate about the things that Jesus is passionate about. That's just good.

James: It's great; isn't it? Here's the neat thing. You say, "Well, that's the James and Betty up there at *LIFE Today*, and that's John and Stasi and they're these Christian writers." Hey, quit looking at somebody else. If you compare yourself with somebody else, measure yourself, say, "I want to be like that." No, we want Jesus to be Jesus in us, to us, and through us.

The thing that attracts me to people... See, I recognize talent. I appreciate great talent because I find it all comes from God so I don't care if it is a musician's talent or an athlete's talent. I don't know how many of them know it comes from God. I mean the businessman's ability, the people that we have the ability to create... think about this. You can make an iPhone basically out of sand, for heaven's sake. The microchips and all the fiber optics, all those things man can do. It's wonderful! It's great! This is what God lets us do.

But wait a minute! The most beautiful thing in the world is you see the glory of God on somebody, the love of God in someone and its filling people all over this studio. You don't realize it, it is supposed to be a flow, and this is holiness, that carries you so

that you live amazed at what's going on inside of you, at who shows up in the situation. Because he is waiting... the kingdom of heaven is at hand. God is here. You don't have to go there.

He said, "I've come here to set up the kingdom in us now." It doesn't mean we're not going to have one someday where there is no enemy, there is no pestilence, there is no disease, no death, no sorrow. Here you're going to have the king living in you so that no matter what happens in holiness, you can live the amazing life. You live amazed and you're amazing, and that is really... many of you in this studio because you've read the things that John and Stasi wrote, you were blessed by it, you were here. You heard truth and it's liberating, and that really is what he is talking about.

The book is in the bookstores. I highly recommend it. All of you know he has got a gift from God to write. But it wouldn't matter how well you could write if you weren't full of the subject and he is. And what he has to offer is a tremendous blessing.

Would you say thanks to John and Stasi? Thanks to John for this book. I hope you'll get it: *The Utter Relief of Holiness*.

[Applause]

I can reach down here just now and get a cup of water; and we like clean water. Some of the good things government does and should do is to protect us from that which can be kept clean and see that it is. But we buy bottled water in the civilized, advanced countries, outside the third world, because people just say "We can, and we just want the purest water we can get." Many people don't have any water. They take disease.

John, Stasi, there's nothing I love more than giving people life because of the love of God, which is holiness.

I want you to listen to a miracle story and watch it. I'll be able to tell you about what happened that preceded this. Some of you are going to remember and you're going to say, "I'm witnessing the miracle of love and really holiness." Watch.

On the mission field

Announcer: Last year, the *LIFE Outreach* mission team met Vaughn and his grandchildren in their remote village in Cambodia. Vaughn showed the team where his family gathered their drinking water. While introducing his grandchildren,

Vaughn broke into tears and shared how his daughter and precious grandson had died because of that contaminated water.

And now a year later, *LIFE's* mission team returned to Vaughn's village and found that his tears have turned into tears of joy. Mission: Water for Life was able to successfully drill and install a new water well, literally in Vaughn's back yard! Vaughn, his grandchildren, and the other villagers now have safe drinking water and their lives have been transformed!

Subtitles:

>> Last year, your group came here and saw my problem with dirty water. You promised to help me and now I have a clean water well. I feel like I have been reborn and I have a new hope. Thank you to all those who helped us and especially, thank you to Jesus.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I know, Vaughn, you have some water -- I know you don't have a TV but I wish you could hear me tell you how happy I am for you. I love your smile. I love those old teeth. I love the fact that you've got children and grandchildren that have clean water. Doesn't that touch you, Betty?

Betty: It really does. This is the part I love is when we get to show what your love and your giving has done for people that without your help, many of them, will die -- the children especially. So this is what I really take great joy in. I know you do. If you've helped before, it is a blessing to you to watch what we've just showed you. So please continue; we still have more water wells to drill to help children just like these. We're going to go from the tears and the sadness to the joy and the smiles on these precious children's faces.

James: I met with our leadership team today before our taping here and our mission overseer said, "We've got all the workers in place. We could drill twice as many wells, we just need the resources."

Then, Betty, they told me today too, they said we could start feeding another 200,000 children next week. They found them but we don't have enough to do it. It really hurt me. I'm glad that we've drilled 4,000 water wells. I'm thankful we're going to, with your help, drill 500 more. But I think sometimes, I wonder, what if everybody decided, "I'm going to drill a well this year for people like that"?

They're \$4800. I keep asking... I asked today, "Are they still going to be that?" He said, "Yes, we've made adjustments and people sacrificed that work with us and they're keeping it there." So far in the depth we're drilling in these areas, we can keep it there. I wish we could say, "Well, go as deep as you've got to go."

"But it costs three times as much."

"Yeah, but they need it." And the only thing that enables us to say that anywhere, "we're going to give you a well" is you. Betty and I are always going to give wells. And from the time we started giving them it was like God said, "You love to bless, I love to bless, and I bless so you can bless, and the blessing flow goes so you just keep the river flowing." So how about joining the flow of releasing the love and life of God by drilling a water well?

Or say, "Well, I wish I could, James." \$48 gives ten people -- ten people water the rest of their life. A gift of \$144 gives 30 people water the rest of their life; \$4800, basically a village, let's say, average about 1,000, most of those small areas. Would you do it?

We have some gifts for you. We want to send you the Awaken Now Conference speakers on CD, DVD, and in transcript form. It will be a blessing. We've got a beautiful art piece. It is absolutely one of the most beautiful pieces I've ever seen, "The Blessing." I see a child giving a blessing and reaching out for the blessing. It has really a double impact. We want to send it to those of you who will make a gift of \$1200 or more to help drill a well.

But for any gift we'll send you the CD's of the conference. I know it will be a blessing and inspiration but a spiritual refreshing to you. The DVD's that you'll want to watch and share and maybe even use in your churches are of these great speakers and teachers. We want to bless you and say thank you for blessing others.

Would you go to the phone and take your bankcard and make the best gift you can or go online LifeToday.org? Do what God's put on your heart and let's give wells. Let's work a miracle for another grandfather and for parents and children like you saw there. Thank you for being a part of it. Please move now to do what God's put in your heart and we say thank you in behalf of those you're going to help.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice: drink filthy, polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is there is a solution! *Mission Water for Life* is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today we can establish and drill 500 new water wells for remote villages in over 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10 people; \$72 will impact 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh, clean, disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift be sure to request the *Awaken Now* audio series, a once-in-a-lifetime gathering of 23 anointed speakers proclaiming a powerful message for every believer in God's kingdom. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request *Awaken Now* on both audio and video, along with the companion book containing the speaker's sermons and encouraging messages.

Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4,800 to help sponsor a complete well. And be sure to request our new commemorative sculptured glass statue, "The Blessing."

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip**In the studio**

James: Betty and I just say thank you so much for your help. If you'd like to have John Eldredge's book, *The Utter Relief of Holiness* we'd be so glad to send it to you. It is in the bookstores. You can get it or you can go online.

But some of you say, "Would you just send it to me? It really caught my interest and I'd like to have it." Well, you help us give water and we'll give you all we can to help you grow and be blessed.

John and Stasi, we appreciate you being here.

Stasi, we're going to talk to you about what God's put on your heart and the book you've written.

Would you say thanks to John and Stasi Eldredge?