

4/14/14
Week 16: Mission: Rescue Life
Carol Kent

James: Thank you all! You're very friendly. You're great! I'm sure you are too. You know what people tell me when I see you out in public? You say, "Thank God you can't see me when I see you on television!" Because it's early in the morning or it's late in the evening; we come on all day.

We try to reach everybody. Don't we, Betty? We just reach out starting early in the morning on A.B.C. Family, then Discovery and then W.G.N. Those are all national networks. And then all the inspirational networks, and then at night; we even come on at Daystar, here locally, at 11 at night -- and at 7 in the morning, and 11 at night -- 7/11, that's easy to remember. That's Daystar; of course, it varies a little bit from various time zones.

We have a guest that started with us, I mean not too long after we started doing the daily talk format. Carol Kent is really a treasure and a great writer, a great communicator, and she's got a book that I don't think I'm surprised at the title, *Unquenchable*, because she has an unquenchable thirst for God.

And here there's a reference to fire; I've always felt like she was on fire. The subheading says: Grow a Wildfire Faith that will Endure Anything. I'm telling you what, she's been through some things that only faith could enable her to endure.

Would you welcome Carol Kent back to *LIFE Today*?

Carol, good to see you.

Carol: Great to be here, James and Betty. So good to see you!

James: Well, what have you been doing?

Carol: I've been busy speaking at women's conferences and churches and prisons. My goal is to live for Jesus while there is time to say his name and sing his praise.

James: You said "churches and prisons." Are there any similarity in churches and prisons?

Carol: Sometimes the prisons are more fun than church.

[Laughter]

James: I bet sometimes prison is more like church ought to be and church is like prison. I'm telling you, I was in churches so many years and it was scary -- really, sometimes. It was like the choir came out, it was like the chain gang marched in; there wasn't any really joy. The people sitting out here just staring at you, it was kind of scary. Is it still that way in some of the churches? Or are they all just alive?

Carol: I would say they are definitely not all alive. But when I walk into a prison and I hear the worship band, made up of inmates who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, there is no worship like that worship! It makes the tears stream down my cheeks and it makes my heart beat faster. And my passion for God says, "Oh, Lord, if you can start a revival here, surely it can sweep across the country and all over the world!"

James: You know what's sad? A lot of churches are filled up with people who are in bondage, and I know, because I've experienced that. And any time we're held captive by something it's a miserable experience and sometimes we're held captive by religious tradition that is really void of the life of God.

But if we get set free and you're talking about those prisoners being happy even though they were in prison, they were a little bit like Paul and Silas in the prison in Philippi, and yet there they were singing praises to God at midnight. So that's the way it should be.

Carol: It is! And James, most of your viewers know that my son, Jason took the life of his wife's first husband and we went through two and a half years and seven postponements of his trial, and then he was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. That has truly been the toughest firestorm of my life. But what God is doing amazes me.

James, Jason was praying for his children to return to him because after six and a half years and some real hardship his wife left the state with the girls and said to us, my husband and I, "If I separate from Jason, I will no longer be in touch with the two of you." And of course, I heard this guttural wail coming out of the depths of my being.

Jason is our only child, these are our only grandchildren. And six and a half years passed and we had an address so we sent birthday gifts, Christmas gifts, some monetary gifts on special occasions, surprises, and never knew if they were received.

And last -- a year ago last summer, I was here in Dallas at a Bible software training conference. And I said to a friend, "How long would you keep sending gifts when you never know if they're received? The girls are now 19 and they're 16 and I don't want to be a stalker grandmother."

[Laughter]

And like this, my friend, said, "Carol, don't ever stop! As long as those gifts aren't returned, those girls will know how much you love them."

That was August, then came September. My husband Gene and I were on our way home from a ministry trip and we had a layover in Atlanta. We had had lunch together because I was staying there for a few days and Gene was going home to Florida. A half hour after we separated my cell phone rang. It was Gene. He was breathless. He said, "Carol, I just got off the phone with Chelsea. This little voice said, Grampy, it's Chelsea. I'm 19 years old and I'm a freshman in college and I miss my family!"

And she came and spent Thanksgiving weekend with us. Then she came for a month at Christmas. And then she came for 10 days at spring break.

Then Hannah graduated from high school in May. She said, "Grams and Gramps, can I come for the summer too?" And we have had a glorious reunion with these precious girls.

And James and Betty, last summer, they came to live with us for the foreseeable future! So we are parenting again and we're saying, "Thank you, Jesus!"

[Applause]

But there's more! James, we had a family reunion. My 89-year-old parents gathered us together in family groups, the first family reunion that Chels and Hannah had been a part of in six and a half years. They said, "Kids, we're old. We're 89, and this will be our last family reunion."

Then momma said, "We have blessing cards for each of you." And they got out these little cards with verses on for each of us.

Mine said, "Carol, you're our firstborn child and you're loved so much. This is our blessing we pass on to you. May God's grace be sufficient for you for his strength is made perfect in weakness.

With love and blessings, Mother and Dad."

Then there's little Chelsea, wondering if she is still going to be part of the family. "Dear Chels, you're our first great grandchild and we've missed you so much, honey. We thank God for bringing you back to us. We love you.

With love and prayers, Grams and Gramps."

I'm telling you, God has restored the years the locusts have eaten. It is hard! It's expensive. It's tough. But it's glorious. And it's messy! Girls are messy!

[Laughter]

James: But a wonderful messy. When you wrote *Unquenchable* and all of this, you've got an unquenchable spirit that the enemy tried to quench, and you had plenty of hurt. And out of the hurt and out of the pain, you've just ministered. It's amazing. You actually started your whole journey on a pretty rough path because you had an accident that could have in many ways could have changed everything forever that you almost would say irreparably.

Carol: James and Betty, my first year of marriage I was going to work in rush hour traffic in a '59 Pontiac, which was old even the year I got married, and my accelerator stuck. I had to swerve at the corner in order to avoid an accident but my car had picked up so much speed it hit a car waiting to make a left hand turn; that car hit a car behind it.

I was now rushing toward the next intersection pulling on the emergency brake but the car was still gaining in speed. And I instinctively thought, I'm going to steer this car into a telephone pole so I don't cause another accident in that next intersection.

And as I steered toward the telephone pole I thought, if I stay here, I'll be dead so I better evacuate. So I steered the car toward the telephone pole, jumped into the middle of the street just in time to see my car swerve when it hit the curb. It went right into the

intersection and hit another car that hit a car behind it, (that is now a five-car collision counting my vehicle.) It circled in the intersection, pulled out a fire hydrant, a park bench, and then finally crashed into the plate glass window of the I.B.M. building in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Police officers came from everywhere and one said, "Lady, what happened?"

I said, "My accelerator stuck!"

He said, "Lady, why didn't you turn the ignition off?"

I said, "I never thought of it."

Now I know you would have thought of it, you're a guy!

James: I may have thought neutral, I might have tried to go to neutral but I don't know if I would have thought of that.

Carol: Well, the next day the paper said: "Driverless car hits window of I.B.M. building" -- and there was my name in the paper.

And do you know there was a time when I felt like my unquenchable faith was starting to turn to ashes because the financial implications were huge. We went through seven years and multiple trials, and every time I was declared innocent of wrongdoing because of a stuck accelerator, a freak happening in my car.

But it was a time when I began to say, "God, are you for real? These financial pressures are too huge."

I remember my husband taking me by the hand and we got on our knees at one of our kitchen chairs and he began to pray. He said, "God, we know nothing can touch us without your permission. And we submit to your authority and what you want us to learn through this."

Now if my younger self could have spoken to my older self, I would have said, "This isn't the worst thing you'll ever go through. Your son's incarceration and conviction of first degree murder will be the worst firestorm."

And I've discovered God is with us in the fire. And he never leaves us and he is victor. And Satan is not God's cosmic equal. He is victor! And I praise God that when the flame of adversity meets the flame of God, he wins!

Betty: Yes, he does!

James: You know we've been through some trials, Betty that you don't ever think you'll ever face.

Betty: That's a great description, the flame of adversity meets the flame and fire of God because with the loss of our youngest daughter, we had that same -- I don't want to call it collision but kind of what it was at times; it felt like a collision. I have learned that that flame of God is steadfast and stronger than what the enemy can ever bring at us in adversity. It was an opportunity to draw unto him who is faithful and just and constant as that adversity came our way and that loss came our way. God is faithful.

Carol: He is! And when we choose unquenchable faith, one of the things I want everybody watching this show today to know is that we need to look back and remember what God has done in the past when our faith feels like it is beginning to fizzle and it's going out. Then as you look back and remember, God brought friends around us who loved on us. God met our financial needs. God blessed us with being able to start an organization to help inmates and their families speak up for hope.

And, James and Betty, you were some of the first people who gave to that organization and I don't know if you remember that. Ten years ago you wrote one of the first checks that helped us to help others and I thank you for that, for blessing us.

And I discovered that when we have unquenchable faith we say, "Lord, in the middle of these circumstances, how can I use what's happened as a platform upon which I can make you famous?"

And James, we started getting invitations to go into the prisons and I'd walk in there and I would see the darkness. I would see how harsh it was and I would grieve for my boy who lives there. And then I was invited to speak at Jason's prison. I got in there and the men started coming in and they were taking their seats. And I began sharing my testimony of what it was like to raise my boy. And I could see the guys elbowing each other and joking because Jason was in there saying, "Oh, yeah, you were a good kid when you were young!"

And then I began to share about a father's tears, and my husband was in the audience. I said, "Gene, come on up here and talk about what it is like to have the tears of a father who has a son behind the razor wire." And Gene shared and I started to hear the sound of weeping of these grown men.

And I got up after Gene spoke and I said, "I know statistically speaking only six percent of you had loving fathers like Gene Kent."

And then I heard men wailing. I said, "It breaks my heart for you and I know the pain that your families are in."

Then I started to challenge them and I said, "I want to challenge you to know Jesus personally."

And James, when people read *Unquenchable*, they'll know it is that spark of faith when we say "yes" to Jesus that's the beginning of the faith journey that can grow a wildfire faith.

And then I challenged them to start a gratitude list; write down one thing every day that you have to be thankful for even in the middle of your circumstances and keep that list and go over it and thank God for those things.

And then I said, "Write to your children. Even if you never hear from them, write to each one of them once a week, no matter how long it takes; let them know they're loved."

And then as I wrapped up that time, I said, "Do one tangible act of kindness for somebody on this prison compound every single day."

And then as I was closing in prayer giving them an opportunity to come to Jesus, come to the fire, there was a man on the front row who started sobbing. And he literally fell off his chair sobbing. And I could feel the power of the Holy Spirit encompassing him. And he said, "I need a father, God. I need a father, God."

And James and Betty, I have not been delivered from my firestorm, Jason is still in prison, but I know the God of the flame. And I know, even if in this lifetime I don't get an answer to my prayer that my son be released from prison, I know that God is using Jason in profound ways as his man on the inside and I rejoice in that.

James: I'm really glad you told that about the man falling and saying, "I want a

father." Because when you're talking about many of them not having a father, and of course, I didn't, I wanted so bad to just say they can have a father, Carol and that's exactly what you told them.

And I wanted all of you are listening to know I don't know anything about your past, unless we've met and talked but if you didn't have a father, you didn't have a good home or maybe you had a father but there's just an emptiness in your life then only God can fill it and he fills it as a father, and gave his son to die that we might be reconciled to the father. There is one mediator, one connection between God and man and it is Christ Jesus. And he gave his life for you so you would have a father and that's the invitation to all of us.

Would you just ask him to become your father? Ask Jesus to become your savior, to forgive you. He died to cover all our sin. Would you ask him?

Father, I pray for everyone whose heart you've touched that they would receive you like that man in that prison, and that they would have a father; in Jesus' name.

Did you know that every day from 1,000-2,000 people call to say, "we need help spiritually" the number you see there on the screen? -- People reaching out to know God, to be forgiven. Some call to say, "We want to help someone else and touch them in their pain."

You want someone to pray with you, you call that number. I wrote a book titled, *Knowing God as Father*. We'll send it to you. It's a simple study on how you can have an intimate personal relationship with God. It will be a real inspiration and blessing to you, if you'd like to have it.

Would all of you here like to say thanks to Carol Kent for sharing her story and let her know that you're praying for them? In the bookstores is *Unquenchable*. And I would be more than happy to send it to you today. What we ask you to do is look at someone

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And Carol, these people that you're about to see are literally in prison against their will. They didn't do something wrong. They were taken captive, nearly all of them as children. I want you to listen to them but here's the thing you need to know.

You can be the answer to their heart cry, the answer to their pain, you can do what Jesus said he came to do and that's to set captives free. You can reach them, you can

rescue them and we can restore them in love. Please watch this very prayerfully. Do not turn away from something that is so wonderful when you share the love. Watch!

On the mission field

>> There are a lot of things I dreamt I'd become. This was never one of them, but it is who I am now. They tell me I deserve it. They say my parents never want to see me again. I'm never alone here for long but alone is all I feel.

I can't keep them out because my door locks from the outside. I hear they've got my sister now. She's about the age they took me. She'll fetch a good price like I did. And of course, they say we're worthless anyway. There's no reason to smile here but I'm forced to. I hate this place but it's like we were meant for each other, filth for filth.

If I was worth anything, worth anything at all surely someone would have come for me. And though I'm all alone, I know there are many. I've seen too many come and disappear. Maybe they're the lucky ones.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Oh, boy, somebody did come. His name was Jesus and he died for every one of those girls. But Betty, for them to know that God cares and that he reaches out to them, we have to be the expression of it.

Betty: Two things, she said that really caught my heart and she said, "This is who I am" and "I must not be worth anything." That's not who you are, precious children! You are the beautiful creation of the Lord Jesus Christ. You're in that situation not because you chose to be, but you are worth the Lord's son, Jesus; he gave his life for you. I want you to know that.

I want us as Christians, James, to have the compassion and the love and the desire to reach out to these precious children that don't know they're worth anything. But we want to show them hope; we want to give them safety. They deserve it. They didn't choose this.

So I hope you will help us. I hope your heart's been touched by what you've just watched.

James: Really and truly, that's the reason we're doing what we're doing. First of all, the missionaries and relief workers found them. They were sent by God like messengers of God's love. And they found out in us in life, *LIFE Today*, a source of love that says we want to help you. And the reason that they know that is because of you.

You see, Betty and I could care like the missionaries, very deeply, but we would be so limited in what we could do. But together, we can literally, as the body of Christ put God's arms around a hurting person like those girls and we can, with your help, rescue them. The missionaries have told us and this has proven true over the years, to support the outreach, to rescue them, to restore them, to begin to give them a new future, to have a place to take care of them, it would cost an average of \$128. Is that amazing? That's what it takes to set someone free.

We've got caring friends like you who contacted us and said, "We so believe in what you're doing that we will match what's given to rescue those precious girls and sometimes boys, that are being held captive." \$128 will be doubled; where you help one by making that gift, it will now be two.

Or if you say, "James, I actually couldn't do the \$128 gift but I could give \$64." Well, we've rescued another one because someone has matched your gift.

So would you dial the number this last week now of the emphasis and say, "Yes, we'll be the answer to that girl's cry. We'll show them somebody does care -- God cares and he cares through us." Would you take your bankcard, use it like a check or go online, LifeToday.org and make the gift? If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it.

Then remember this, we must build a safe house in Cambodia. The situation has reached a state there that we've got to have a place for them to stay, to come, to get them out -- not just a place to transition but we need a safe house. To build it here it would cost a couple million dollars: There, right at \$350,000; 350 people giving \$1,000 and we would have it. Thank God there have been some who have been doing that. This last week, let's finish that out; would you please?

We have a beautiful, beautiful glass sculpture to send you. It's called "The Blessing." We want to say thank you for being a blessing. And then the other gifts that we have are to help you grow spiritually in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.

Thank you so much for making the call. Thank you for going online. Please do it now. Do it prayerfully and compassionately. And I thank you!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Human trafficking -- it's impossible to believe but at this very moment innocent children, many very young, are being sold and forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable. And someone must save them!

With your help today we can reach, rescue, and restore their hope for a better future. And now a miracle opportunity of a matching grant means your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child will be matched to help rescue two children.

Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. This year, with your help, we also hope to build a safe house in Cambodia where young rescued girls can find safety, loving care, and direction for a new life. The cost of this safe house is \$345,000.

With your gift, please request *My Daily Gift*, a beautiful new devotional describing the great love of God, who treasures you more than you can imagine.

With your gift of \$128, which today will help rescue two children, you'll receive the side-by-side Bible, which includes the easy-to-read New International Version and the Amplified text with its additional words and insights.

Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,000 to help establish the safe house in Cambodia and you may request our 2014 commemorative glass sculpture, "The Blessing."

This is the last week. Please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I express thanks for those girls that thought they must not be worth much. Yes, they are! Very valuable!

We're sending My Daily Gift; it's a devotional book that will be a blessing to you.

If you'd like to have Carol Kent's book, *Unquenchable*, we would be glad to send it to you. She's just such a beautiful person and communicator. And my goodness, the pain and suffering she's been through, to walk where she is, you talk about a source of inspiration, I promise you, she will be, no matter where you've been or what firestorm you're going to find that faith enables you to overcome.

Would you again say thanks to Carol Kent?

Carol, thank you so much!

Carol: Thank you so much, James and Betty. God bless you!

James: You know we're on your prayer team! And we're with you.

Thank all of you. Thanks for being with us and the outreaches of *LIFE*. Thank you for being such a blessing!