

4/29/14
Week 18: Spring Mission Feeding
Mark Driscoll #2

James: Hey, you're a nice, nice audience. Thank you! Thank you for giving us this opportunity to share time with you. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I have Mark Driscoll back with us who wrote, *A Call to Resurgence* and many other outstanding books. He asks the question here in a subheading: Will Christianity have a funeral or a future? We talked to him about some of the things that perhaps have hindered the Christian witness and why sometimes young people seem to be turned off or not interested.

Charles Stanley, a very good friend, said he asked God once. He said, "Why don't people like to go to church?"

He said God said, "I don't like to go much myself."

[Laughter]

Here's the deal. The way it is when it is so traditional and it is so ritualistic and so dead that kind of turns people off. We've got a living Jesus that's best friend and a father that really wants a family that love him and love one another and even love their enemies, and young people think that they don't see that.

Mark does a tremendous job of showing you some of the reasons that we have had not been the light that pierces the darkness and illuminates anybody's way. We look like we're stumbling around in the dark. And we have settled into a complacency that is not attractive. He is brilliant, articulate, an incredible writer, very, very smart -- thank God for him. He talks about tribalism and we're going to talk about what we can do in a positive way; pastor of Mars Hill Church in the greater Seattle area, Mark Driscoll.

Would you welcome him to *LIFE Today*? Good to see you again, buddy!

Mark: Thank you, guys!

James: Okay. We got problems.

Mark: Yeah, I'd say we lost the culture war, that gay marriage is the civil rights issue of this generation and if you don't support it you're on the wrong side of history. And I would say if you're a Christian in your teens, 20s or 30s, you're probably in the closet not wanting to go public with your faith because you will lose a ton of social capital by waving the Jesus flag; there's really no benefits to it.

I think a lot of parents and grandparents are worried because they feel like they're losing their kids, they're losing their grandkids. A lot of your viewers are in that position. Some will want to fight back; let's take the culture back. My thing is, I think we need to win Americans and not America.

James: I think we need to win Americans to have any effect on America because if we don't transform hearts and minds, we're not going to correct a perilous course. We have to impact people's thinking. But I don't think we give up the cause. And I'm not going to stop believing that marriage is between a man and a woman.

Mark: I was reading this book. It seems pretty clear.

[Laughter]

Sometimes that's really the issue is where does the authority lie? Does the authority lie in me and what my desires are or does it lie in God and what his desires for me are as revealed in his Word? A lot of this comes down to Bible issues.

James: Well, it is. And I think the problem we have a lot of times, Mark, is when we deal with an issue that seems to be dealing us in, it seems to be holding us. We have a tendency to change the truth to something else to accommodate our failure or our weaknesses.

Now one of the things I know because Christ changed my life, he really did change me. I didn't buy into church stuff. I didn't buy into signing up for religion. I was born again into relationship that led little Miss Church Lady, little Miss Baptist Choir Member, Sunday School teacher and little goody-goody two shoes, she saw Jesus so real in me that she comes out of the choir to give her life to Jesus because church wasn't going to get it. Now I signed on for Jesus.

Here's the deal. I have missed the mark -- I have missed the standard; right, Betty? You remember when you did all the confession sheet in your Sunday school and you're supposed to confess your sins?

Betty: I couldn't think of any of mine so I wrote his down.

[Laughter]

I really did that. Isn't that terrible!

[Laughter]

Mark: Can I get some more paper?

James: Yeah. "I need a legal sheet." Here's the deal though, I've missed the mark -- never, never, never tried to move the standard to accommodate my failure. Now that's what we've done today. When people have an issue, a compulsiveness, an addiction, we then want to move the truth over to accommodate us. When we do that, according to Paul clearly in Romans, then we're given over to the control of the appetite that we're trying to justify by moving the truth of God. You've never allowed people to move the truth but you've reached out to everybody who is missing the mark somewhere and say let's adjust to it. We don't move the mark. Am I right about that?

Mark: That's why in *A Call to Resurgence* I get into the issue of repentance. That ultimately the culture's highest value is tolerance and the Bible's highest value is repentance. And that those two values at some point collide. And one says: You are fine the way you are and the other says: You need to change -- and those are antithetical.

The truth is that Jesus is tolerant and that you come as you are, whatever you've done, but he invites you and commands you to repentance: A change of mind, a change of heart, a change of lifestyle and identity and all of the implications of that.

So Christianity, particularly Protestantism, it's about repentance. You know Martin Luther's 95 theses nailed on the Wittenberg door; the first one was: All of a Christian's life is one of repentance. That the Christianity --

James: It really is. It's a continual process.

Mark: It rises or falls with repentance. Peter gets up to preach and Christianity

explodes and is born and the Holy Spirit blesses because he commands people to repent. If we don't repent, we're hypocrites. If we don't call other people to repent, we're heretics.

James: That doesn't mean it's a final one time repentance because we're continually -- it's a lifestyle.

Mark: I sinned yesterday, I got sin I haven't even gotten to. I hope we're done soon, I need to get to it.

[Laughter]

It's a lifestyle where you realize you're sinning. The closer you get to Jesus the more you realize how sinful you are. As I grow in my Christian faith, I know how sinful I am more than I did even last year.

James: You know if you're looking to him though, if you're looking unto Jesus, you keep stumbling up. It's amazing.

When Simon Peter, walking on the water, took his eyes off of Jesus, went down, the ride back to the boat was better than the walk out, he rode back in the arms of Jesus. So if you're looking to him, even when you falter and you fail, he's there to pick you up. He really wants to help us if we live with a repentant heart. This was a failure, I did miss the mark; he is anxious to pick us up.

What do we do because I am concerned about the direction of the church? I have been doing my best to get Christians to do what Billy Graham challenged me to do years ago that really contributed to transforming so much of my own life. He said, "I challenge you to spend time with people you've been taught to avoid," which according to your book that meant I'm going to spend time with people in another tribe. I did that.

You know what happened? It was incredible. It was iron sharpening iron. We came together like this. We didn't come together like this; that dulls a blade. We came with common purpose and we both got better. Does that make sense? Would that be a healthy process of getting the church to look more like a family, with a father we love and people we love?

Mark: You see this like in the -- you speak of the father and then the great parable of the two brothers. One is religious, one is rebellious and oftentimes in the church, they

end up fighting and arguing. One is self-righteous and the other is unrighteous; and the only hope for either brother in the story is the love of the father is going to bring them together. And in the church you've got the rebellious, you've got the religious and they're often fighting each other and they've lost sight of the father and his heart for the whole family.

James: Well, I haven't given up on them coming together because I believe that if Jesus prayed it, it is important. I believe that prayer is answered -- his need to be answered. If I can be a part of being an answer to that prayer by helping inspire and encourage the unity in the family to get us -- if you're going to have your little tribes, could we still be the greater family of God? Am I right to be pursuing that?

Mark: Yeah, and I think there was a day during Christendom when Christians were at least perceived to be the majority. Not anymore -- we're the minority. The first thing you learn as a minority group is we can't shoot each other because there is not a lot of us, and we're already getting shot.

James: And you're talking about serious Christians too. You're not talking about church folks because there are a lot of people in churches that don't really know Jesus, they just -- have never met him. But you're talking about the people that really know him and love him; they're kind of in the minority. We better love one another.

Mark: As far as practicing Christians, read the Bible, go to church, pray. The number of practicing evangelicals, I talk about it in the book is similar to the number of practicing homosexuals.

James: Now that's shocking!

Mark: Two minority groups in the six, seven, eight percent realm depending upon what statistics you agree with. And if you're dealing with the younger generations, it's almost identical, the practicing committed homosexual, and the practicing committed evangelical. Well, we need to learn from each other, love one another.

My thing is if we love each other, that will allow us to retain our theological convictions and differences because if you read the Bible and you're deeply convicted about something and I read the Bible and I'm deeply convicted about something, the Bible also says to love one another, and so that's what holds us together while retaining our convictions. If all you end up doing is talking to people who agree with you, yeah, you're really missing an opportunity to love the whole family and to grow.

Too, oftentimes the tribal leaders, they only talk about each other, they never talk with one another and then their tribes -- they spend their time infighting instead of evangelizing. And meanwhile, we're a very sheltered minority group that doesn't realize that the majority of the culture has no interest in Jesus or the Bible or repentance or the church or anything that we care about.

And meanwhile, we're wasting a lot of time and energy. We can either choose our traditions or our children but we can't have both.

My belief is that the line between Christian and non- is getting sharper and clearer, and some would say, "Oh, the percentage of Christians is down."

I would say, "No. Actually we're now getting a clearer account of who is really in and who is really out."

Because during Christendom, one of the things I talk about in the book is there were social benefits to being affiliated with the church.

James: Sure! And help your business or anything else.

Mark: Help your business, help your family but now there's no benefits. Like I'm in Seattle; there is no benefit walking around with a "Jesus Loves You" T-shirt and you wouldn't do that unless you were really on the team or like a hipster making a joke; that might be the only reason to wear the shirt.

So I think what you're getting now is people will no longer profess a faith that they don't possess and practice because there is no benefit to it. Maybe in certain more Bible-based areas, you can still profess a faith that you don't possess or practice because there's benefits but the culture is changing so fast that I think it's good because we know they're in, they're out, they need to be fired up, and they need to love and serve and evangelize and reach. And this is just where we find ourselves. I think we lived under the illusion that there were a lot more Christians than there actually were.

James: Speak to us elderly people sitting here. Are we feeble in the thinking that we've really believed this nation could look to the shelter and shadow and the shepherd and he would lead us in green pastures, he would make up for the years the locusts have eaten? Is that a vain promise in that book you've got on your knee?

Mark: I'll tell you, if there is an awakening, if there is a revival, we're all for it. I think one of the things that will contribute and help us -- I didn't intend to go here and

maybe I should or shouldn't, we'll see. I think generational ministry has hindered some of the move of God's spirit because you've got people that are growing up and they were from broken homes and their families are scattered. And so we'll put them in age-appropriate ministry to where they don't know people that would be their parents or their grandparents. So the older people in existing traditional churches, they're off in the old folks room and then the parents are over in the parents room and then the singles are in the singles room and the college students are in the college room. And what they really need is a family, that mentoring that comes relationally and generationally.

James: See, I want to go get in all those rooms.

Mark: Yeah, I would take the seven year old and put them in with the college guy who just got saved and is so confused that he needs somebody to help him save him from himself.

James: I'm comfortable wherever you put me because I love everybody where they are.

Mark: Well, if you've been married 51 years you're like a unicorn. Young people have heard of that but they don't know it's real.

[Laughter]

They don't know it's real. It's a mythical possibility.

[Laughter]

James: And God is a god of miracles so here sits a miracle. And really and truly, I'll be honest with you, with the background I had, being the product of rape, and never having a dad and dysfunctional and poor.

And then, man, you talk about a guy loaded up with appetites and desires and behavior, this girl, I'm telling you, I've stood on her shoulders. She's pulled me up out of the pit and listen to me -- there is not anything a praying woman can't accomplish. And a woman that holds on and honey, you've been, as everybody knows -- Dear God I would never want to go into a trial with this girl. I lose right up because everybody knows this lady has been such a blessing.

I just want to say to everybody praying for their kids, for their spouse, for their family, for their neighbors – listen -- God does hear and answer prayers. We are a miracle but he wants the miracle to be the typical and not the unicorn you just referred to.

Mark: Yeah! And I would say within that even the way you shared your story, that's lacking. Oftentimes religion wants to explain the result not the process, explain the victory not the series of defeats that led to Jesus' victory. Your story, a product of rape, tough guy, angry guy, well, you go into the church right now it's men aren't there -- young men aren't there, single men aren't there. They're out doing all kinds of things they shouldn't be doing.

But even sharing your testimony and being honest and saying, "Here's where I started, here is what Jesus can do," then we know who the hero is and there's hope for everybody in that.

James: I'll tell you what; I know that I still have the depth of conviction. I had many people tell me, "James, I loved to hear you but you were scary, and now you're the most broken, tenderhearted, compassionate person we've ever met."

Mark, I know that there's a lot of truth even in that statement. God has broken my heart. I really do care very deeply, and I believe the Lord cares deeply. I believe he wants people to have that love flowing because it is so easy for it to be hidden, even in preaching or style or dynamics. I want him to keep shaping me. I want to be soft clay in his hands. That's what I encourage everybody to do.

I hear you saying if we're going to have a future and not a funeral, we need to with a repentant yielded heart yield the clay of this vessel to God and allow him to shape us. Then be a part of the process of inspirationally shaping others by the testimony of our lives. Is that where we meet?

Mark: Yeah, and understanding culturally where things are at, how we got here, and how to explain to people that this is the only world they know, that there's a better world that is possible.

James: And there is in Christ.

Do you love this guy, Mark Driscoll? I do!

[Applause]

I really do! Get the book. I'll be glad to send it to you.

Mark, I have so many people tell me about you. They'd say, 'Boy, we'd like you to know Mark because he is just a really special person.' I began to just kind of communicate with you. And I want to thank you for the way you received an old guy and you listened to me.

Mark: I want to learn, to be honest with you. I want to learn.

James: Well, we've had some good fellowship, good times together talking; haven't we? Have you felt good about them? I have.

Mark: Yeah, felt encouraged. So when anybody encourages me, I like them!

[Laughter]

James: We're rare! Well, you know something? I want to be an encourager. I want all of you to know, please hear this, you're more special to God and his purpose than you ever imagine. He has not overlooked you. You may feel like everybody did. I was a kid that never got picked because nobody knew me, I moved all the time. So I didn't get picked to be on a team. God picked me. He picks you. I don't know where you are in your journey but you're real special to God.

Father, I pray everyone will know that and they might want to know you as their friend, their father, their savior; in Jesus' name.

You want someone to pray with you? That phone number there is a prayer line; it's a lifeline too. Well, it's a prayer line for you. Don't hesitate to call.

And all of you who would like to have *A Call to Resurgence*, it's a tremendous book! It's just fabulous. I love it and marked it all up. I wish I had brought my copy; I underlined so much in it, it just jumped off the page into my heart.

Mark, we help save lives. We drill Water for Life and tell them about the water of life because they've seen love. We give people food because He is the bread of life.

I want you to look in on a scene of tremendous need and I promise you this -- listen to me -- you're the miracle answer! Please don't turn away because you're going to be the miracle some mother, some child is looking for. You are the miracle!

On the mission field

Announcer: They say waiting is the hardest part of life.

[Children Crying]

These eyes express this all too well.

After traveling miles to this clinic in rural Africa, these families have all come to sit and wait. But they already know the diagnosis and it isn't good: Severe malnutrition.

Once the doctors attend to these children and the nurses do all they can, each mother is left with nothing to do but wait. But is it too late?

Her baby's heart rate begins to grow faint and his breath labored.

Those eyes once wide with hopeful wonder begin to dim as if to say his waiting is almost over. Room after room, mother after mother praying with child after child, waiting for a miracle.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Oh, boy! I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that you are the miracle.

Betty, what we're seeing there, and our grandson Luke was there, our oldest grandson, where we've been so many times, that is what we call the malnutrition clinic. That's the last place if the mother's fortunate enough to be able to get there, that's where we give the intravenous feeding, give the oil and sugar water, whatever we can do just to get something there. We're rescuing most of these children before they reach that state, and that's what the feeding programs do.

We've got 400,000 children that are on their way to just that situation. But if we can feed them and balance their diet, which we can, by giving them a nutritious, especially formulated mix to meet the nutritional needs there in their area, we can save their lives and stabilize them.

So we're asking you to make a gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 and then those gift amounts, we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next months and save their lives and keep

them from getting there, Betty because we've seen them get there and we're able to rescue them but it's so much better if we get them even before they get there.

Betty: It is! And it's hard as a mother to sit there and watch precious little children like this that haven't lived life at all hardly, they're very, very young so many of them, and to watch that mother there with a broken heart because a mom's nature is I can fix this. I need to fix this. That's my child. But to even wonder if the next breath will be the last breath that her little one takes, we can make a difference because the problem is they need some nourishment. That's where it starts. So please reach out with us and help us do this for these precious little children that God loves so much.

James: And what we're offering works. It really does work. They just need food. And we've seen them so malnourished that they eat dirt to try to fill their little empty stomachs.

We're asking you to dial that number, please. Take your bankcard, use it like a check, that's how you should always use it or you can go online, LifeToday.org and make the gift. Many of you are doing that. Thank you!

If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it. We have some special gifts that we want to send you to bless you. But I pray you're going to the phone or going to go online.

I do want to mention because we always, as you touch others, we want to touch you and bless you. *A Dad's Blessing*, I wrote to bless children, to bless dads, to bless boys and girls.

This is our son, Randy, who wrote a book, *Rise Above*; how you can literally rise up on wings like an eagle. It is a tremendous book. We want to send these to you to say thank you for any gift.

And then we have some special bowls of blessing that we want to send that look like this. These are ceramic bowls, *Life: Give it, live it, share life in word and deed*. You will use these many times and you will talk about them to many people.

We want to say thank you for saving lives. Thank you for giving out of love. Thank you for giving life. Would you go to the phone or go online? I'm asking many of you to help us with a real crisis because of a drought in Angola. We need a tremendous boost in support to reach out to an additional 100,000 children. Could you possibly give \$1,000 to help us feed 100 children? Pray about doing that. Would you?

Thank you so much for your help. Thank you for being a miracle!

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.

With previous food reserves gone and Angola facing its worst drought and food shortage in 20 years, we desperately need to replenish our supplies for our feeding programs immediately!

Your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for the next three months.

With your gift of any amount we will send you this inspirational two book gift set, *A Dad's Blessing* by James Robison is packed with valuable fatherly wisdom and insight for dads of all ages.

Rise Above, by James and Betty's son, Randy Robison will show you how to soar far above the circumstances of life and go higher in your walk with God.

With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children you'll receive our blessing bowls, a great way to teach your family about giving and a daily reminder of God's provision for hungry and hurting children.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed 100 children and you may request our 2014 commemorative glass sculpture, "The Blessing."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: We are sending you for any gift *A Dad's Blessing*. I promise you it will be. I love the boots there and the little boots by them. It's our son. I'll tell you what, he's a dad's blessing, and what he wrote will bless you.

Mark Driscoll, *A Call to Resurgence*; what a gift he is to the church and to us. We love and appreciate him. If you'd like to have his book today you help us feed some of those children. If you'd like to have this book, it's in the bookstores, you can get it online, but we'll send it to you just to say thank you.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks again to Mark Driscoll? Mark, God bless you. Thanks for being here.

[Applause]

Thank all of you! You really are wonderful Friends for Life! You're giving life. Thank you for responding. Thanks for the time.