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Week 18: Spring Mission Feeding
Randall Wallace and Todd Burpo

James: It is a real blessing to share this time with you. I'm James Robison; Betty and I are thrilled to be talking to you about the fact heaven is for real. I'm holding up a new version; it is actually a publication of *Heaven is for Real*. Nine million copies already sold; now it is a movie and this is a special movie edition and the movie is in the theaters.

This is about a little boy four years old who went to heaven and what he saw. There wasn't any question. It was an out-of-body experience; it was an out of this world experience and has changed so many lives -- changed his whole family's life -- this four year old because he'd seen things that were totally supernatural, indescribable -- but he did describe them.

Now it is a movie. I want you to see just a trailer from the movie that I pray everyone on planet earth goes to see because you don't want to miss what it's about... ever! Watch this and then you're going to meet the dad and you're going to meet the gifted screen writer, the one who did *Brave Heart*, *Secretariat*, and lo and behold this. You'll meet him in a moment but watch this trailer.

>> Mommy?

>> Yes, Colton.

>> Did you know I have a sister?

>> You didn't know that Cassie is your sister?

>> No, I have two sisters. You had a baby die in your tummy; didn't you?

>> Honey, who told you I had a baby die in my tummy?

>> In Heaven, this little girl came up to me. She told me she died in your tummy.

>> The pain that I suffered watching my son that close to death.

>> We're in trouble. Will you call some friends that will pray for him?

>> The hospital said that your son was not expected to survive -- used the word *miracle*.

>> Your son had a near death experience.

>> And he saw things that I can't really explain.

>> I lifted up and I looked down. Mom was in room; you were in another room yelling at God.

>> He's been out there staring for hours.

>> Is something wrong with Colton?

>> Why do you say that?

>> Sometimes he says weird things.

>> You had a grandpa named Pop, right?

>> He died when I was about your age.

>> He's very nice.

>> You saw my grandfather? Where did you see him?

>> In heaven.

>> Is this the man you saw?

>> No, in heaven everybody is young.

>> Is this him?

>> Yeah. That's him; that's Pop.

>> Honey, did you punch a kid in the nose?

>> They were making fun of Colton.

>> Is she going to get a spanking?

>> Heck no! I'm just going to teach her to hit without hurting her knuckles.

>> I want to believe him but everything he talks about is impossible.

>> You saw Heaven? What does it look like?

>> It's beautiful!

>> We all want to be supportive but we can't have our town turned into a circus.

>> They don't believe me; do they?

>> Some people might be afraid of believing.

>> Don't you think we need to be talking about this life?

>> Do you think my son went to Heaven?

>> You don't have to worry. He told me everything was all right.

>> He's making a difference.

>> Haven't we already had a glimpse of something from the first cry of a baby, the courage of a friend, the love of a mother, father? I see it so I believe it.

>> Do you?

End of clip

In the studio

James: All right, I would like for you to welcome the writer and the director, Randall Wallace, and the father of that little boy, Colton, Todd Burpo. Would you welcome Randall and Todd to *LIFE Today*? Glad to have you.

Randall: Glad to be here.

James: Well, Randall, I have appreciation for you because I really did like the William Wallace story in *Brave Heart*. And you are actually related; is that correct?

Randall: Yeah, I can't prove that I am but nobody can prove I'm not.

[Laughter]

James: And you did *Secretariat* and I love the old happy day. It was a phenomenal story. How did you get involved with this? What got your attention?

Randall: This story of a father, first of all; I'm a father of three sons. And the idea – and I've been a Christian my whole life, certainly since I was 12, and was baptized and accepted Christ. The realization that that doesn't spare you from the pains of fear or loss or seeing the people you love pass away; that we have to confront fear. That faith doesn't mean the absence of doubt or the absence of question; it means courage in the

face of those things. And the idea of what this guy experienced with his son there so close to death just tore at my heart. That's where our story starts for me.

Then the thought that he went from there to have his son begin to tell him about all the things that we hope -- our dearest hopes that those we love are in heaven and what heaven really is like. It's not an amorphous idea, it is not an intellectualization; it is something real that just seemed like a story that had to be told and would make a perfect movie.

James: Were you blown away by what your son told you he was seeing when he began to tell you the story?

Todd: All the time. I would like to say though that I accepted it greatly but I was cynical. I was never prepared to say this is how you talk to your son about heaven when he goes there. I was caught by surprise. And yet every time I questioned him, he could prove what he was saying; he could talk about things he could never make up and be right and get all the details right -- my past.

But more than anything else, when he talked about God and Jesus and even how the trinity works; what complicated concepts and to him it was simple.

And then not only that but then when he talks about meeting his sister in heaven and then my grandfather in heaven. We had a miscarriage, never told him about it and he's the first one that says, "Mom, you had a baby die in your tummy; didn't you? I've got a sister up there." -- Things that brought us so much hope and healing.

I think in the world people realize a child is probably your best witness because they're not contaminated with an agenda or adult think, and he doesn't know how it all works but he knows what he saw.

I think that's what's so compelling about not only the book but now the movie is that same way. A little child is going to tell all of us adults to sit down and say, "Hey, let me tell you what I saw."

James: How do you explain the way it took off? Why do you think it captured people's attention like it has because it has been a phenomenon -- not only unexpected but almost unexplainable. Do you have any way of trying to...

Todd: Two things: I think God knew the world just needed a kid. I think the Bible talks about child-like faith and talks about child-like accepting. Well, this is how it is. One of the things that Colton grew up with, that I had to deal with my son, and he didn't realize he was different from other people until probably about 10.

He was like, "Why don't adults believe the Bible?"

I'm like, "Because they haven't seen what you've seen."

[Laughter]

And he didn't get that. But another thing, too, with Colton that I think is so amazing is God has allowed him to remember specific details. He didn't just go through a tunnel or see a bright light. He talks about his sister. I mean when parents have lost a child that's a hurt that's so deep. And he talks about "I met my sister, and mom and dad, she sees you and she can't wait for you to join her. And she was so happy that I was there. And she wouldn't stop hugging me."

He didn't lose his boyhood while he was in heaven either because he was like, "I didn't like that, Dad."

[Laughter]

But he still -- I remember him telling me, "Dad, but I told her you would give her a hug because you always give your kids a hug." That was one of my most -- that day was so painful and that pain was replaced by such healing so quickly, that peace that passes understanding, I think one of the things that God pushed us on is: is it right for you to keep that kind of peace to yourself?

And when he talks about my daughter, he talks about my grandfather, what is our family going to look like in heaven? Here's a little kid, "Oh, I know." And that's how the story unfolds and he tells us all.

James: You've done some big features and they seem to have a spiritual application and you seem to be determined that they will; right? Because you want people to know the Lord; that's big in your heart as a guy in Hollywood. Tell me truth. Is this really what you want? You want people to know Christ and know him personally?

Randall: I was a seminary student; when I left the seminary thinking that I wasn't getting the call, I spoke with my family pastor. He knew I was studying religion in school and he said, "Do you feel the call to be a pastor?"

I said, "Honestly, I don't though I know it is the greatest call anyone can have."

And he said, "You're wrong. The greatest call you can have is the one God has for you."

And this is my call. This is where I tell the truth as I know it. And Jesus was a storyteller. Instead of arguing about theological points, he just told stories. This story makes you experience the love of God. And it's an experience, it is not a sermon, it's not an argument for heaven. It's to say, this is what this boy saw. This is what this father and family experienced. If you see this movie, you'll experience the same thing. You'll experience the love, and you'll experience the faith.

James: So you're excited about it?

Randall: I only want to work on movies that I think have the power to change lives and it starts with mine. If I think, this story affects my life, then I tell the story in the way that it affects my life and then I trust God for how it might affect others.

James: When you look at what's going on, Todd, as a pastor and yet a worker too,

trying to do extra jobs just to take care of your family and you're watching what is going on, what's the hope inside of you that will come from all of it?

Todd: Well I think there is one line in the movie that Randall wrote in there that I love. There's a scene where my character tells a person who is really hurting in the movie who she lost her son and she's mad at God because he gave me mine back but she lost hers. I've had that conversation with a lot of people. When God doesn't answer prayer the way we want, that's when faith becomes a struggle. Did I not pray hard enough? Did I not do something right? And she's hurting.

James: Sure! And we've been there because we were on that journey.

Todd: And I tell her in the movie and the line's wonderful. He says, "When I saw Colton about die and when I was in that hospital room yelling at God, something inside of me broke and I don't know if it's fixed yet."

And he looks at her and says, "You never have to apologize to me for a broken piece that you carry." And I think sometimes in church we think faith and everyone has to have everything right and get it altogether.

When I read my Bible, I only read one person who didn't sin and he even struggled with his Dad, if you remember the Garden of Gethsemane, I mean drops of blood! I would say that's a pretty big struggle. When his dad didn't do what he wanted. He said, "Dad, can we change plans?" You know?

And yet, today we need to let room for people to say, "You're in a struggle, that's good but you make sure you take that struggle to God."

And this movie talks about the struggle. It doesn't apologize for it. It says it's real and it's normal and it's okay but you stay in the struggle. I love that about it.

James: I want all of you to know that the title of this book is just simply the truth, *Heaven is for Real* and there is one way there. Jesus said, "I, Jesus, am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me."

And he's preceded that by saying, "In my father's house are many mansions, many dwelling places, many places for you to live. They are there. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I'll come again that where I am you may be also."

Heaven is for real; our daughter is there. You know the beautiful thing with our daughter living until she was 40, having three teenage children in love with Jesus, all she showed us from the time she trusted Christ as a young girl, she just showed us Jesus. So everywhere we look that Robin lived, she left life, the beautiful imprint of life. I could wish that for everyone.

I don't know where you are. I know that it is the desire of the one who directed it and the Dad whose son inspired it, that if you go to see this movie -- and take a friend, they would not want to miss Heaven because you don't want anyone to miss it. It is too wonderful!

And can't you see the hellishness on this earth everywhere God is missing? Where he is not? And imagine when it is only his presence and the way there is through Jesus; that's really what they're trying to communicate.

I pray you go, it's in the theaters now, and see it. We would be happy. You can go online or go to the bookstores and get the bestseller. But we would also send it to you today if you would help us save some lives, and we'll tell you how in a few minutes.

Randall, I know that you've done some pretty special stuff and gotten a lot of wonderful recognition and awards. Are you excited about what you think this particular film -- you know when you look at *Brave Heart*, you look at *Secretariat*, you think about what a great family impact that made as far as just blessing people. Both of them basically true stories, and you somehow, I believe inspired people to look beyond just the scene and see the reality of eternity and the beauty of freedom and the beauty of running the race and winning with the ability and talent God gave you, even if you're a racehorse, use it!

We need to run the race Paul said and win it. When you look at this, are you excited as a director about what it's going to do?

Randall: I'm excited and I'm also moved. This movie made me laugh and it made me cry. Most of all it gave me joy.

When I hear you speak of your daughter, one of the things that comes through as you talk about grief and loss is there's an incredible peace and love that's what comes through. That's what came through to me in this story. What Colton described was a God of love, and heaven is a place of joy and peace.

Todd and I haven't gotten a chance to talk about this yet but before the making of the movie I was having -- I nearly lost my hand in the hospital; I nearly died in the hospital.

Todd said, "I should have warned you that this has happened with lots of people that have gotten involved with the movie that they've had challenges." Then my mother passed away two months before we started filming. I found in the horror of losing someone, even -- and it was her time. She was in her late 80s but my mother led me to God and it was still -- as hard as it was, there was an incredible peace that comes from looking at a corpse and thinking, that is not my mother. My mother is not there.

And I believe that this movie gives people a sense that not only is God in heaven but God is here. That the beauty that God has created, that this world, that the love we see, the love of a parent to a child and a child to a parent, that that love is God and God is in heaven and God is here.

C.S. Lewis said, "Those who go to heaven will believe that heaven began when they were born here." That love has the power to change this life.

James: Oh, and that is the truth! That really is it because we're going to go to heaven but he wants to put heaven in us. He likes to get the hellishness out of us put heaven in us now -- thy kingdom come now. Not us hurry up and go to the kingdom, that's going to be wonderful too, but he said, "I want you to live with the kingdom of heaven

prevailing and being revealed not only to you but through you in this life." And that's what's actually happening to you.

Todd: Absolutely!

James: I want you to say thanks to God but also thanks to this wonderful director and to Dad, for sharing the story. Would you just thank Todd and Randall?

[Applause]

I hope that you will go to the theaters. I hope you will encourage friends to go with you. This is one of the most wonderful ways to witness. I did city-wide and stadium coliseum crusades.

I remember our oldest daughter, Rhonda when she was nine we did one in the Birdville stadium near here. At that time we set the attendance record; we filled both sides and the field. Johnny Cash came and joined the last night and he sang, "Man in Black." We had a wonderful time.

But you know what my daughter said? She won about 8-10 people to the Lord that week. And she said, "Daddy, it's so easy. When you're preaching in the stadium, I can just bring my friends and they get saved."

Let me tell you something, that's what a movie like this can do because it is so real and heaven is so real, and the story is so clear and true. So use it as a witness.

Let me tell you something right now that is going to give you great joy. I want to show you how you can be the miracle that someone is looking for. I want you to look and then I want you to be the answer to find joy in being the answer to meet someone's need and be the miracle they need.

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: Betty and I say thank you so much for your help! And if you'd like to have *Heaven is for Real*, I hope you will see the movie; encourage others to go or go with you. And if you'd like to have the book you help us rescue those precious children and give them some food, we'll be glad to send it to you along with the other books to say thank you.

Would you once again say thanks to Randall and to Todd for what they've done, for the story?

Randall, thanks for the movie.

Todd, thanks for the story you shared. Praise God! Tell Colton we said hello! Will you? Thank God for him.

Thank you all for watching *LIFE Today*. Thanks for sharing life!