

5/5/14
Week 19: Spring Mission Feeding
Bishop Tony Palmer

James: Thank all of you! And we welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison; Betty and I are thrilled to have Bishop Tony Palmer with us. This is a real answer to prayer because here is a really truly spirit-filled evangelical from the Anglican Episcopal Church. We've got some rifts in some of the Episcopal church where some of them we're really wondering what in the world they're doing as far as what they think about marriage and so forth. That's not where he is; he is overseas and all over the world and he is a soul winner and a witness. But he developed a relationship and a friendship with a man who happened to become the Pope, Pope Francis. It is a miracle what God is doing.

I want you to welcome a man that I believe is a part of seeing the prayer of Jesus answered in our day that we become supernaturally perfected in unity -- not sameness, unity. Would you welcome Bishop Tony Palmer to *LIFE Today*?

Bishop.

Bishop Palmer: Good to be here.

James: I really appreciate you. We have been a supporter and an encourager of your work, your mission outreach. Let me just ask you, how in the world did you come to meet the man who is now Pope and actually not only be a friend but remain a friend? Tell us a little bit about that.

Bishop Palmer: It was back in 2006, I was asked to go down to Argentina to work with the Charismatic Catholics because they have quite a Charismatic revival going on within the Catholic church and has been for almost 50 years. So it's protocol whenever we go into a diocese of another Bishop, we visit the Bishop, ask him if we can work in his diocese. That's exactly how we met.

When he found out that my wife, being a charismatic Catholic herself, and our children, he thought it was quite entertaining. So he offered a friendship to me immediately. Here is this evangelical Anglican married to a Charismatic Catholic.

[Laughter]

So I said, "Look, we're covering all the bases here."

[Laughter]

So he offered me a friendship. Two years after that, 2008, I asked if he would be my mentor and a spiritual father to me, and our relationship just deepened from there.

James: He loves Jesus. After he got to be Pope, did you wonder if your friendship would continue to where there would be some communication?

Bishop Palmer: I'll just back step if you don't mind one step here. At Pentecost last year when we were celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit, I was invited to be with him at the Vatican for the celebration where there was 450,000 Charismatic, spirit-filled, tongue-talking Catholics singing "Come Holy Spirit!" So it was quite a thing.

He went around in his Pope mobile greeting everybody and they were all shouting, "Francis! Francis! Francis!"

When he got to the pulpit his first words were, "Why are you shouting my name? You should be shouting Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!"

So yes, he is incredibly Christ-centric.

James: I can see that. He loves people.

Bishop Palmer: Oh, he loves people! Yes, absolutely! How I got to my relationship with him, when he became Pope it wasn't really a surprise. I knew that he was Pope material but it was obviously exciting to see my spiritual father become Pope. But now that he had been given a new job description I'm sober and mature enough to know probably my relationship will change, but it didn't.

James: Tell us about it.

Bishop Palmer: Well, it was just after Christmas and I was having some free time with my son who is almost 18 now, watching TV and I get a phone call on my cell phone. I was lying down on the couch. I reach over, pick up my cell phone. I said, "Tony Palmer." And he said, "Pope Francis." "Oh!" I ran upstairs to my office and asked, "Why are you calling me?" And he said, "Well, basically, it's time for us to visit. We

haven't seen each other for a long time." He asked me when I was going to be in Rome next. I said, "Well, fortunately, I'll be there in two weeks time." He said, "Can you top in and see me in my private residence and we'll spend the morning together?" I said, "That will be great." That's how we met in January.

James: So it wasn't just a little handshake. He actually saw you right in his apartment?

Bishop Palmer: Yeah, we spent the morning together.

James: That's amazing! It is a miracle, to be honest with you. Now tell us what happened because the Pope wants to say something to you. He wants to say something to Evangelicals, to Protestants outside the Catholic circle; he wanted to talk to all of us as Protestant/Evangelicals who love Jesus and who pray for everybody and for him. So what happened?

Bishop Palmer: January 14th, I sat talking, just like here, visiting. I was telling him that the week coming, the week to follow I'd be in North America, be here in Texas, Fort Worth at a conference where it would be for Evangelical Protestant leaders, about 3,000. I said, out of respect, would he like to give them a word through me so I could just greet the brothers?

He said sure! He would love to do that. So I waited for a moment for him to say something.

And I said, "Must I write it down?"

He said, "Well, let's make a video."

So we speak in Italian together because his mother tongue is Spanish, mine is obviously English, but our meeting language is Italian. So I needed to understand.

I said, "Do you want me to reach in my pocket for my iPhone and take a video?"

He said, "That's exactly what I want to do."

So impromptu, took out my iPhone, switched it on, and he gave a seven minute greeting and a call to the Evangelicals.

James: And here it is. Let's listen. Would you like to hear that? Would you like to hear what he says?

[Applause]

Begin video clip

[Open captions]

>> Dear brothers and sisters, excuse me because I speak in Italian but I am not speaking English. But I will speak no Italian, no English, but 'heartfully.' It's a language, more simple and more authentic, and this language of the heart has a special [particular] language and grammar. A simple grammar. Two rules: Love God above all, and love the other [neighbor], because he is your Brother and Sister. With these two rules we can go ahead.

I am here with my Brother, my Bishop Brother, Tony Palmer. We've been friends for years. He told me about your conference, about your meeting. And it's my pleasure to greet you. A greeting both joyful and nostalgic [yearning]. Joyful because it gives me joy that you have come together to worship Jesus Christ the only Lord.

And to pray to the Father and to receive the Spirit. This brings me joy because we can see that God is working all over the world. Nostalgic [yearning] because but... it happens, as within our suburbs. In the suburbs there are families that love each other and families that don't love each other, families who come together and families who separate themselves. We are kind of... permit me to say, separated. Separated because, it's sin that has separated us, all our sins. The misunderstandings throughout history.

It has been a long road of sins that we all shared in. Who is to blame? We all share the blame. We have all sinned. There is only one blameless, the Lord. I am nostalgic [yearning], that this separation comes to an end and gives us communion. I am nostalgic [yearning], of that embrace.

That the Holy Scripture speaks of when Joseph's Brothers began to starve from hunger, they went to Egypt to buy, so that they could eat, they went to buy. They had money. But they couldn't eat the money. But there they found something more than food, they found their Brother.

All of us have currency. The currency of our culture, the currency of our history. But we have to encounter one another as Brothers. We must cry together like Joseph did. These tears will unite us. The tears of love.

I am speaking to you as a Brother. I speak to you in a simple way. With joy and nostalgia [yearning]. Let us allow our nostalgia [yearning] to grow, because this will propel us to find each other, to embrace one another. And together to worship Jesus Christ as the only Lord of History.

I thank you profoundly for listening to me. I thank you profoundly for allowing me to speak the language of the heart. And I also ask you a favor. Please pray for me, because I need your prayers. And I will pray for you, I will do it, but I need your prayers. And let's pray to the Lord that He unites us all.

Come on, we are Brothers, let's give each other a spiritual hug and let God complete the work that He has begun. And this is a miracle; the miracle of unity has begun. A famous Italian author named Manzoni once wrote in his novel, of a simple man amongst the people, who once said this... "I've never seen God begin a miracle without Him finishing it well." He will complete this miracle of unity.

I ask you to bless me, and I bless you. From Brother to Brother, I embrace you. Thank you.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Pope Francis, let me just say to you that I see Jesus in you; and in Christ we are brothers, we are family. Thank you for speaking the language of love that all may come to know him and love him and love one another.

Tony, that is incredible. I have had a longing in my heart for many years now to see the prayer of Jesus answered that we be one with the Father God through Christ, perfected and sanctified in truth, not divided by it. And then perfected in unity, the supernatural unity Jesus prayed for. I personally feel like this is a step in the right direction -- for us to really come to Christ and not be separated brethren, not divide over differences as we see them. We may not even see clearly and we tend to look at our view as the only view and sometimes we don't even hear truth at all.

Bishop Palmer: Correct. See diversity is divine -- it is division that is diabolic. And we often, because of our insecurities, we are unable to handle and to hold in tension diversity. For us we think that something different is something wrong and it is not -- it is just something not the same.

James: God likes that by the way.

Bishop Palmer: Look at the creation. We see diversity all around us. Diversity is divine without a doubt. It is the division that is diabolic. What's important for us to understand is Jesus' prayer in John 17. Jesus' theology is that if God is in you and you're in God and God is in me and I'm in God, we are one together in God. So I'm not one -- I'm not united in you, I'm united to you in Christ -- and this is the hope of glory.

Jesus prayed, "Father, the glory you've given me, I have given them." What is the glory? The glory, Paul -- Peter -- it was Paul who wrote and said that the hope of glory is Christ in us. And so we need to recognize this and understand that unity already exists, it's a scriptural fact.

Our sin is that we don't make our unity visible because we allow our diversities to divide us. And if we elevate anything to divide us, we are elevating it above the cross. So whether it's a dogma or doctrine or expression, if you use that to divide our unity, you have elevated that doctrine or whatever it may be above the cross.

Now we're not saying put doctrine aside, absolutely not! In fact --

James: Of course not! Of course not, because we speak correction in order that we maintain the family relationship with God and one another.

Bishop Palmer: Please, let's note what Pope Francis did here. Pope Francis said, "We need two things, two rules, love God first and foremost, with all our heart, soul, and strength and to love our neighbor like our self."

And people are getting angry about this because they're saying what about the doctrine? But that is doctrine -- that is Jesus' doctrine. Because when the lawyer asked Jesus, "What must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus said, "But you're the lawyer. What does the law say?"

And the lawyer said, "To love God with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself."

And Jesus responded and said, "Do this and live." -- End of doctrine.

James: I'm telling you, the gates of hell tremble at the thought of God's people loving

God and loving one another. And you'll never love God without knowing him through Christ and the cross. And you will never love your neighbor properly if you don't start loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and truth.

You want to say thanks to Tony for bringing back that message? And he's going back to be with the Pope and we're specifically asking that he would meet with some Evangelical leaders and perhaps even some business leaders from the United States so that he could encourage prayer for a nation that has known freedom and has been so charitable and benevolent throughout the years because of that great foundation that is totally biblical; and we want people praying for us.

Tony, you are a missionary and you know our mission director, Steve Coetzee. You're very close. So you know when we hold up a little bowl like this and we're trying to feed people or you've seen us drilling the water wells and working all over the world, you see that when you give people Water for Life or food, they'll listen to you when you meet that need.

Now this is what I want us to do. I want you to look -- and I really believe, Betty, it's really good if we can learn to look through the eyes of Jesus and see what he sees so we can put the arms of his Father around the suffering, which is what His body does.

Now I want you to listen to the heart of mothers and a mother, and see the need that I believe we together can meet. Watch very prayerfully please.

On the mission field

Open captions:

Announcer: Mothers like Domingas usually find joy in talking about their children. But for Domingas there is no joy. Her stories are filled with sadness and anxiety because her children are malnourished due to the lack of food in their village caused by years of drought.

The look of despair in Domingas' eyes speaks of her constant worry that the day is coming when her children's health will reach a point of them no longer developing properly. As the harsh sun continues to take its toll on the land, Domingas' fears of her children's health deteriorating has become a reality for scores of other mothers like Maria and her child Antonio.

Maria traveled miles by foot to this rural clinic in a desperate attempt to save Antonio's life. Severe malnutrition has set in motion the outward signs that Antonio's body is starting to shut down because of the lack of food. Domingas' children urgently

need help now, otherwise they could soon find themselves in a malnutrition clinic fighting for their lives.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I really think it is important for you to understand that we try to get these children before they would ever get to that place. We give the resources necessary to support those clinics, but that is the last step. And most of the mothers whose children reach that point, they don't even get to the clinic.

If we can get to the children, Betty, which we've been doing for years now, about 25 years, we've been finding children where they're hungry, and like right now in Angola, there is a terrible drought. There are 100,000 children suffering desperately and I'm praying because we can feed literally feed 10 children for several months for \$100.

So I'm praying this very specific prayer that there will be 1,000 people would right now give \$1,000. Maybe you can be one of those, and then that will take care of 100 children and then that would meet the need for those 100,000. We've got 400,000 in those feeding lines that you and I have stood in so long.

Betty: Many, many times we've watched them, James; and many, many times we would be there and we would run out of the food because it's hard to judge how much you might need and always -- always the lines are longer than we would expect them to be. And it's always been our prayer and it was especially my prayer when we began this journey of helping children get the food, the nourishment they need -- was that the lines reaching out in hope with the food would be longer than the lines of the children coming to get the food.

That is still a desire of my heart, James, that we can be ready for them because they will come. They are desperate and the mothers will bring the children because they love their children so much! And they see them at death's door so many, many times. So our heart is that you'll join with us and let's be ready for the children because they will come -- they're hungry!

James: This is probably one of the first times that seeing that prayer answered appears to be threatened because of this terrible drought. That's why I made the very, very definite specific request. I put it in plain terms. We need 1,000 people -- it's one person at a time giving \$1,000 -- because we want to take care of another 100,000 that are

really in critical condition. That was in Angola where you saw that clinic. We've got the children ready and we've been in so many areas where they were dying and we stopped the death cycle.

Betty, we watched them where there were graves of little children and then we began to feed because our viewers helped us, and then we got the children singing in church and thanking God.

So what I'm asking you to do right now is go and get your bankcard, like a check, dial the number and use that card like it's a check, and make a gift for \$30, \$50, or \$100 or the \$1,000 if you can, and we can feed three, five, or ten children for \$30, \$50, or \$100. I'm asking you to make a gift.

We want to send you a book that I wrote, *A Dad's Blessing*. I'm telling you, this is for everybody! If you're a dad or whether you just want to hear what a dad -- what his blessing is.

And our son wrote a book, *Rise Above*; how to learn to be lifted by the truth of God and by faith above all the challenges and circumstances -- Phenomenal book! -- just to say thank you.

Then we have some other gifts that you're going to cherish: A beautiful glass sculpture to thank those of you who will help us reach out to that additional 100,000 children.

Would you go right now? Dial the number, take your bankcard or go online LifeToday.org and make the gift God put on your heart. Thank you so much for doing it! From the bottom of our heart, thank you for doing it now!

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: If you could help us take care of 100 children, make that \$1,000 gift, "The Blessing," the glass sculpture. And you know we've been talking about the need for us to come together, and Tony Palmer, Bishop Palmer has been here.

Tony, the Catholic church throughout Africa have compounds that are secure. We don't allow the government to take care of any of our resources -- not anywhere in the world. We don't trust them. But the Catholics kept our food, here we are Evangelical Mission Outreach, they kept all of our food secure. Don't you want to see the prayer of Jesus answered and Christians really become a family who behave like the wonderful Father we've got?

Would you say thank you to Bishop Tony Palmer, to the Pope for his message? And pray for unity.

Tony, we love you! And we'll be praying for you as you go back to see Pope Francis and pray that we can have a great coming together. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all

would come to know Christ and love him and love one another? What a day! What a day!