

4/28/14
Week 18: Spring Mission Feeding
Mark Driscoll #1

James: Thank you all! Welcome! Welcome to you. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison; Betty and I are thrilled to have Mark Driscoll, pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, the greater Seattle area. This is -- and he's got many best-selling books -- this is one that I've read and I tell you what, marked it all up. I wish I had brought my copy because it is just all marked up. It's not like I'm scratching stuff out -- I'm underlining stuff.

[Laughter]

Be calm over there, pastor! It's marked for all the right reasons. But it's called *A Call to Resurgence: Will the church have a funeral or a future?* It's really a good question and we're going to talk about some of the things he deals with.

One of the things that really builds in a climatic fashion is how the church -- and he uses the word has become tribal. I've called it "sectarian, denominational, divided into various camps, building their own fortresses, firing their verbal martyrs at one another, trying to destroy the others." Does that sound like wonderful sweet Christians? Sounds a little bit like congress; doesn't it? Maybe we taught them. But nevertheless he deals with it as tribalism and like a tribal leader and understanding. But he's not really critical but he's showing how that really diminishes the glory and the light of God unnecessarily.

And really, frankly, I think he inspires us to want to be lifted above the walls. Well, Mark Driscoll is with us. We're going to talk about what he sees in this program and in another program. Would you welcome Mark Driscoll to *LIFE Today*? Mark, good to see you!

Mark: Thank you.

James: It's an honor to meet you because I've been hearing about you. People say stuff about you. Sometimes they criticize you.

Mark: I've heard that too. I don't go on the Internet. My joy is precious so I try to

preserve it.

[Laughter]

James: Do you think you deserve any of the things they say?

Mark: Sure! I'm a sinner. I make mistakes. I fail. All you can do is, when you're wrong apologize and when you're right, hold your ground.

James: Jesus said love our enemies. I learned something about that. We really should because oftentimes they're the only ones that tell us the truth. Really, they used to tell me I was angry. They called me "God's angry man." I would even come out and pose for the media because they wanted to catch those shots.

Mark: I saw a few of those -- yeah! I saw that.

James: So I would let them get free, they could go on back to the house; and I would give them what they were looking for. But the fact is, they were right. I had an anger inside. You can get angry trying to get all these church folks, if you preached in churches like I did, man, you get mad because you're trying to raise the dead and they don't want to raise. They just sit there like corpses -- like they're embalmed and it really ticked me off a lot. I had to get over it and God had to -- really, he needed to do something in my heart because the wrath -- this got me -- "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" -- over in James. So I know you catch some stuff.

I was just asking if you've ever learned anything. I hope you are learning from it because it will come, but it can be a great teacher. I feel like when I've talked to you, I feel like I'm talking to someone very teachable.

Mark: Well, I hope so. To be honest, I think I started as like angry young prophet in Seattle; new Christian preaching the Bible in a culture that wasn't really excited to get a lot of Bible teaching. As I have been blessed with five kids and a lot of spiritual kids, my heart, as I grow older is to become more of a spiritual father. The thing that the Holy Spirit is really impressed on me, studying the scriptures is -- where Paul says, "You have a lot of teachers but you don't have a lot of fathers." It's a generation that's from broken homes and doesn't have fathers, especially spiritual fathers, and so my heart is single people, young people, collegiates, post-college, younger-than-professional, and trying to learn how to be a better, more helpful, humble, biblical,

patient, encouraging, spiritual father; that's the deep desire of my heart and I see it happening. There's still a lot of work to be done.

Betty: Don't you think that's what the younger generation, a lot of them, are looking for too, someone that they can really look to as a father, so to speak, and that will give them wise counsel, and that will give them security in many ways.

Mark: Yeah, if you're the average person, let's say you graduate from college, you're working a career, you're not going to be married until you're around 30. Where do you go to figure out about dating, sex, marriage, parenting, life, how to overcome sin or addiction or... where do you go? And who is going to help you? And that's where the church has a really glorious opportunity in the midst of a broken culture to be that family of God and to provide spiritual mothers and fathers to help.

James: Well, and too often the church sits around talking about non-relative ideas and theological points of view that really don't apply to anybody where they really live. It's like we can't cut to the chase and get honest, which Jesus always did. He was a great confronter, a compassionate confronter, but you always knew you had heard the truth in love and you had to deal with it.

Today it's like the church preaches about stuff but doesn't really talk to people. You indicate that you think that the church over the last several decades, if not even longer, has basically lost the young people and those coming up as though they have no respect, they don't have any interest in it. It's like these people -- I was talking about me trying to raise the dead, there's a lot of truth in that. They just sit there. The chain gang comes marching in and it marches out.

Now thank God there is some drastic changes that are very, very positive. The church we're in, many of the churches in our area are, Mark, are exploding spiritually. They have broken out of that tribal prison that you talk about. What do you think happened to the church to lose the young people to where they were turned off because I know you've done a lot of study on it and you talk about it in this book?

Mark: Yeah, my youngest son, he wanted to watch Star Trek recently; I'm not a big sci fi fan. We're clicking through channels. "Dad, what's that?"

"That's Star Trek."

"What is that?"

"Okay, I guess we've got to do this."

So we walked a Star Trek episode with my son. What mesmerized him the most was the worm holes; to think you could be in one universe, very quickly pass through it, and enter into a completely parallel universe. And to me, it is a good illustration or analogy for where culture is.

During that reign of Christendom I get into in the book, the church was in a privileged place, people were taken to the church as a baby to be baptized, and you go to church at least for holidays; and weddings and funerals were in the church and the pastor was kind of respected to some degree in the community.

So older generations, the parents and grandparents that are watching the show, that's the world they're familiar in. And then the world that their children and grandchildren are growing up in, all of the sudden it's a completely different upside down universe: Homosexuality, drug legalization, pornography, sexual assault, people living together, people sleeping together. And all of the sudden it's more in vogue and fashionable to be against Christianity than it is to be with Christ.

So you've got this massive generational gap from Christendom to post-Christendom world. I think a lot of young people are trying to figure out, is Jesus even relevant anymore? And their parents and grandparents who do love Jesus are really trying to figure out, what happened?

Probably when you were growing up if somebody said, "What's your position on gay marriage?" you would be like... that's not even a question anybody asked but today it's the civil rights issue of our generation; it is the litmus test of whether or not you're a decent citizen. So the world has changed very, very quickly and it's not trended in the direction of Christianity at all.

James: And you're talking about decent citizen whether you accept it or not. In other words, if you question it, then you're not a decent citizen. But I know you've questioned it.

Mark: Yeah, well, we need to still be people who believe in tolerance and transformation; that Jesus is tolerant in that he welcomes everybody no matter who you are or what you've done or where you're at, but once you meet him, there is going to be transformation. Things in your life are going to start to change. That's the hard part of Christianity is that our culture really is for tolerance but not for transformation.

Jesus loves us so much that he doesn't let us stay the way we are when he first captures us, he changes us.

When we legalized gay marriage in Seattle, the city I love and I love the people there, and about 100 people a month have been baptized every month for about five or six years. People are meeting Jesus. It's great. I'm glad to be there and teach the Bible. But when we legalized gay marriage it was like the Super Bowl. Those were the two big events in Seattle in recent years. And there was 200,000-300,000, there were various estimates, people that came out for the march supporting gay marriage -- once they won -- it was like the victory parade. And my downtown church was right in the middle of it and the parade is going by as I'm preaching Jesus. Everything went okay but man, it ain't Dallas, I'll tell you that.

[Laughter]

It's different.

James: But the point is that you are standing there in the love of God, never approving but at the same time you're loving like a father the people that you believe that... just like we've got problems eating away at us in areas that are not exactly that, you're extending love to everybody and you don't have to compromise to do that. I think that's a point you make.

Mark: Well, my point is too that when we started in Seattle 17 years ago, now we're a church of 15,000, five states, 15 locations, God's been exceedingly gracious and I should have killed this thing 10 times with my mistakes and errors and immaturities but God has been very gracious to us; that I see the rest of the culture is trending in the direction of where I've already been ministering. S

o the things that are new in certain parts of the country are just the way it's always been for us. So I've wondered, are we not like Noah's dove kind of sent out, here's new land and here's where things are going and where the culture is building next? But to think even as a pastor, a Bible-teaching pastor, there's a guy committing adultery sitting next to a guy who is sleeping with his girlfriend, sitting next to a gal who is addicted to pornography sitting next to a homosexual. How does one of them get picked on? Instead of all of them loved and invited to Jesus for a life change?

James: Right and we're talking about a life change, we're not talking about okay, we're just going to leave everybody where they are. Jesus simply doesn't do that. When he says "go and sin no more," he's also giving us a divine enabling to overcome that

which holds us captive. He came to set captives free. And that is really what he wants to do. But I'm telling you, we need each other sometimes to win these battles. We really do need to know somebody's walking through this with me and they're not going to bail just because I fell off the wagon or I made a mistake or I overate or overindulged or I did something wrong. There has to be that prevailing continual love. Now is that right?

Mark: That's where I'm asking God, "Just grow me fast as a better spiritual father." Like you, I love my children and I couldn't love them anymore and there's nothing they could do to cause me to love them any less. And no matter who they are or what they do, I'm their dad and I will love them and I will serve them and I will be there. And God forbid they go in a direction that I don't agree with; my love for them is not predicated on their performance but on my affection.

I think the more we have the father heart of God for people and the more that people know that we have the father's heart for them, it allows us to approach sin in a way that is -- I always say more like a coach than a critic. I'm not here to destroy you but to help you. I'm not here to push you away but to draw you near. I'm not here to tell you how I'm more holy than you are but how Jesus is holy and we both need him.

James: Yeah, a good coach doesn't just show people what they're doing wrong, he trains them in how to do it right. And there is inspiration in that and good instruction, and I think that's what God has blessed you to do. You seem to have a real desire to do it. Betty, how do you feel about where Mark is and wants to do?

Betty: As I'm sitting here listening, I feel like what you're really trying to present to these young people or old, young, whoever that come and are really seeking, it is about that relationship with Jesus Christ, with God. And as that relationship matures and grows, God will then, through his relationship with them, bring that conviction and show them real truth and what his truth is.

Mark: What I always tell people is, if you belong to Jesus go with your deepest desire. You're going to have temptations that are lesser desires but your deepest desires are the desires of God. And God doesn't just forgive our sins, he changes our desires. This is where Paul says to the Galatians that sin keeps you from doing what you want to do. At the deepest level, you want to obey the scripture, you want to honor the Lord, you want to submit to the Holy Spirit, so it's calling people to more passion, to more commitment, to more devotion and it's saying sin is when you settle for something that is less passionate, less satisfying, less worthwhile. So we're calling you to something actually greater and not lesser if you follow those deep Holy Spirit desires.

James: When I was preaching in the crusades in the stadiums and coliseums, I used to say to people, "One way I know that I know that I'm really saved is I really long for the day when I can't sin."

In other words, when we're actually beyond that; in other words, there is not something inside of me deeply rooted that says, "I want to sin." There's something that is bigger inside of me that says, "I don't want to. I don't want to be held captive."

Now you believe that the church, however has become too tribal, too ritualistic, too traditional to get out of their own little circle, covered; I call them getting under a covering that hides the glory of the light of Christ in us so we don't ever become a city set on a hill. We're a little cluster well-covered, comfortable in our setting and we're not piercing the darkness; do you agree with that?

Mark: Yep.

James: So when we're talking about getting out and I want to do another program with Mark and he's been talking about really how we've lost it and that's one of the ways. We've gotten covered and hidden in our little tribal setting.

Mark: Christians are fighting instead of evangelizing. Their priorities are off.

James: We've got plenty of common ground to quit splitting over theological points. I say to my Pentecostal friends, quit discussing tongues and use the tongue you have for the glory of God and be a good witness. And I say to all my Bible Baptist friends, quit waving your Bibles and defending it and start demonstrating it. Don't just carry it to church, let the word carry you. Does that make sense? Does that sound like good preaching in Seattle? Will that work in Seattle?

Mark: I think those are good points!

James: See, that really is the truth. And we settle in and we lose the punch. We don't really impact with what I call the weight of gravity -- kingdom gravity.

Mark: With that too, I always say you fight differently with your family than your enemy. So I was the oldest of five kids. I've got two brothers, and we're going to wrestle and scrap and fight but it is not like if somebody broke into the house in the middle of the night -- that's going to be a different engagement. And if somebody is a

Christian but they're in a different tribe or a different team, they're still part of the same family.

So for me, I've got deep theological convictions. You're a Bible guy, you've got deep theological convictions and it doesn't mean that we try to water down our faith to the lowest common denominator. What it says is -- the same book that gives me all of my theological convictions says to love you, and says to live as a brother, which is a family.

What that means is that over and above our theological convictions there are relational commitments. I heard Andy Stanley say it once. We were talking and he said, "You can either make a point or a difference but to make a difference you need to have a relationship."

James: Exactly! That person has got to know, no one is going to listen to you if they don't believe you have their best interests in mind. If they don't believe that you love them and care about them, forget it! That is the reason a lot of our national leadership has lost the people because they don't think they really care about them and if they care about them at all, it is so they can use them to maintain their position or power -- and that has to change. Now I've not given up on a visitation from the glory of God on planet earth. I've not given up --

Mark: If we're voting, I vote yes!

[Laughter]

James: There you go! The invitation of the Lord to come back to the shelter and the shadow of the almighty, that's a broad invitation and I think God wants people to respond. If they'll respond then they're going to find the shelter and the shepherd to lead them. Can we talk about is there hope for the nation or are we just going to hang in there and wait for the rest home in the sky? Which I don't think you've been real high on that attitude; at least you don't act like you are the way you write, and I think you meant what you wrote. By the way, the book is in the bookstores but... Do you like this guy? Do you like the way he communicates? I like him a lot!

[Applause]

I thank God for Mark Driscoll. I thank God for Mars Hill. I thank God for a man I consider to be brilliant and teachable and who really wants people to see Jesus in us so that they will be drawn to Jesus, not to one of our clubs or tribes, but to a relationship

with him. If you would like to get the book it's in the bookstores. I will tell you this, Mark, we are, by the grace of God saving precious little children. Our ministry has had the joy of saving, according to African governments, maybe eight or nine million of their children -- of their little kids! And we praise God for that -- the viewers have done it. I want you to look in where our oldest grandson, recently married, I want you to watch him and see what his concerns are and know that we can be the answer to the prayer and heart cry of every mother and every child in need. We have the answer. Let's watch.

On the mission field

Luke: The thing about these clinics are the parents have gotten to the point where this is their only option to bring their kids. You know when we visit the villages and stuff like that, we are getting there most of the time prior to a disease occurring to one of the children in the village. But this is where they have to come if they don't have the proper food supply. And outside this room is just lined up with moms trying to find help for their kids.

We're here with little Felicia, and that's what her father was just saying was that their crops, because of the drought here in Angola, he can't provide any food for the kids, and Felicia is malnourished, not getting the proper food supply. And it's not like it's a disease or anything, it's just that she doesn't have food.

As a father at some point, I'm thinking, how would I respond if my child was to ever look like this or have a problem like this? For me, words can't express the sadness in my heart to look at her arms and think, that's just because she doesn't have food and water. I grew up watching my grandparents come over here. From a young age I've always wanted to be able to do this, to be able to come over here and do anything I could to be an influence to bring life to people that can't help themselves. And we want to be able to give them the life they deserve. But we need help.

End of clip

In the studio

James: We had lunch with Luke earlier today.

And Luke, we love you, son!

From the time he was a little boy, he was four years old, walked in on me when I was making an audio tape and he just interrupted and started talking about the little children. And he said, "We're going to feed them."

I said, "Oh, are we?"

"Yeah, because if we don't they will die."

And I said, "How are we going to feed them, Luke?"

He said, "With money -- we're going to give money."

I said, "Where are we going to get it?"

He said, "We're going to give it."

And thank God, what Luke was talking about, our viewers have done it and you've saved the little children like Luke was talking about that were there at that hospital.

Betty, you have prayed for so long that when you and I saw the long lines and we saw the people coming because they heard there was food, and sometimes they pressed in and there would be more coming, little children and their families bringing them than we had food for because we didn't know that many would show up. And then you began to pray, "God, let the lines to feed them be longer than the lines that need to be fed." And that's been the prayer you've been an answer to and it's something God put in your heart.

Seeing Luke there really touches me, Betty, to know that he's caught the vision of helping people which is what our viewers do.

Betty: It's a great joy to see one of our grandchildren over there reaching out and caring about those that are needy. Luke has a big heart for those in need. They are very needy as you can plainly see. We need to take time to search our own hearts and say, "God, what can I do in that situation? How can I help?" We can all help.

I hope you will join with us. It doesn't take very much to feed these precious children and give them an opportunity to grow up because without our help, many of them will not live very, very long. As you can see, some of them may not make it as it is. So please join with us and let's make the difference. Do what Luke, in his heart, I know requests, reach out and touch the lives of these precious children.

James: I'm confident that you will. We will save those children before they get to that malnutrition clinic which is the one few people get to and it's the last hope. We want to reach them out in the areas where they are hungry, where the drought is prevailing. We found another 100,000 that have really been hit hard in Angola because of the drought. Some of the missionary leadership and some of our leadership here said, "Why don't we pray that we can get the money to take care of them?"

Could you possibly give \$1,000 to help us feed 100 children? Remember, for \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next months; that's the nutritional soup mix that they need.

We're giving away these beautiful little ceramic bowls. These are beautiful! They have little spoons with them. You inspired the heat-resistant bowls that we give to the children, a blessing in every bowl. Mission feeding, that's what it is. We want to say thank you.

I'm sending the book I wrote, *A Dad's Blessing*. And Randy our son wrote *Rise Above: How God's spirit and his truth will lift us up enabling us to soar higher, rise higher and further and faster than you ever imagined; he is an incredibly gifted teacher/writer*.

We want to say thank you for helping these children. Now here's what I'd like you to do. Take your bankcard, go get it, go to the phone, use that card like a check. Make the largest gift you can. If there's any way you can help us care for 10 children with a \$100 gift or 100 with a \$1,000 gift, do it. Would you do that please?

We come to you twice a year asking you to help with this. Please do it. If you want to go online, LifeToday.org; make the gift God put on your heart. We've got gifts to bless you because you are blessing others with the love that God put in your heart for them. Thank you so much for doing it!

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: This is "The Blessing" glass sculpture. This child reaching out; it is a blessing. We're sending it if you can make a gift to help us care for 100 children. We really need that in drought-stricken Angola right now. We're praying 1,000 of you will do that. It really would be wonderful if you would do it and make that gift.

Here is Mark Driscoll's book we were telling you about. He is going to be back now on another program. We're going to talk about what we do now about the situation. But if you'd like to have this book, he has written many bestsellers; this one is and I love it! I'm telling you, I thought it was absolutely great! We'll gladly send it to you. You help us care for these children, if you'd like to have this book, we'll send it along with the others.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Mark Driscoll again?

Mark, we'll talk to you again on another program.

Thank all of you so much! Don't miss the next program and tell your friends to watch *LIFE Today*! D.V.R. it! Watch it online!