

7/8/14
Week 28: WFL
Antoinette Tuff

James: What a privilege it is! Thank all of you. We appreciate this opportunity to share with you. I'm James Robison; Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

We have seen too many times someone walk into one of our schools and just begin to shoot innocent children, faculty, staff, teachers, people trying to protect the children. It happened. It started like almost a continual process randomly after Columbine, and then what happened in that elementary school at Sandy Hook when all those precious little children were killed.

Now stop and think about this. Over 800 elementary school children and in comes someone with an automatic weapon, walking right into the main entry area shooting up everything and begins to threaten, knowing that scores and scores, if not even hundreds of precious little innocent elementary children could be slaughtered just like they were up in Connecticut.

But a miracle of God -- and I mean I'm talking about a miracle only God could perform -- with a woman that you're going to meet in just a few minutes named Antoinette, last name Tuff. I'm going to tell you something, tough got redefined. And I mean it got redefined beyond what we call tough -- it got supernaturally enabling.

And Betty, none of us really know exactly what we might do if somebody comes in saying, basically, we're going to -- it's going to be a slaughterhouse and how you respond. I want you to listen. Before you meet this woman who was part of the miracle -- undeniable miracle -- I want you to listen to her voice on a 911 call and then you're going to meet her and go through the story of the miracle -- I'm talking about an indescribable life-saving miracle of almighty God. Listen to the call.

Begin audio clip

>> Please give the address of your emergency.

>> Yes, ma'am. I'm on Second Avenue in a school. And the gentleman said, "Tell them

to hold down the police officers coming." He said he's going to start shooting so tell them to back off.

>> Okay one moment.

>> Do not let anybody in the building, including no police. Do not let anybody in the building, including the police.

>> Stand on the line with me, ma'am. Where are you?

>> I'm in the front office. Ooh, he just went outside and started shooting!

[Gunshots]

End of audio clip

In the studio

James: Would you welcome Antoinette Tuff to *LIFE Today* please?

Antoinette: Thank you!

James: We're going to hear some more of that extended conversation. I've just got to ask you now, just take us kind of play by play. In the first place, according to what you tell in this incredible story that will inspire everybody, you weren't even supposed to be at the exact spot you were. You weren't supposed to be sitting where you were. You were supposed to be somewhere else; right?

Antoinette: Yes, I'm the bookkeeper and my office is actually down the hall around the corner. The principal came in and asked me if I can actually go and relieve the secretary that morning for lunch. And so as I am now sitting at my desk, I'm now getting ready to go up to the front and get a devastating phone call. The phone call tells me that I have seven days to come up with \$14,000 unless they were going to repossess my car. But unfortunately, my husband had just left me months before that, a marriage that I had been in for 33 years, the man I'd been with since I was 13 years old. So I am now sitting at my desk overwhelmed, crying with emotions of what do I do now, God?

And so now I get another phone call, and now it's the secretary asking me where am I because I am now late for her to go to lunch. I should have been back at my desk by the time I got there. But... but God! He delayed the moment because he knew that if I

had gotten up there the time that I was supposed to be, I would have been back at my desk and the gunman would have come in on her and not me.

James: All right. Here he comes in on you. You've already had just a remarkably pleasant day; right? Everything is just terrible.

Antoinette: No regular routine.

James: No, nothing's right but here you sit and in comes this gunman with an automatic rifle. All right; what happens?

Antoinette: So I'm sitting there helping the teacher because she asked me if I can help her with her paperwork. So I'm sitting there and I look up and here's the gunman. So at first I'm like, okay God, this has got to be a joke. I just got a devastating phone call! This can't be! Okay what are you trying to do? So I'm now sitting there having a conversation...

James: So you're actually having a conversation with God.

Antoinette: Just like I'm sitting here having one with you.

James: And is he like listening?

Antoinette: I'm hoping he is because the man is standing there with an AK-47 going to and fro. Allowing me to know that we all going to die today. So if you never had a conversation with God before, this is now one time that you are now hoping that you've got a line on one and nobody is going to interpret the phone call.

James: You're dead serious.

Antoinette: Oh, I'm serious.

James: But are you scared?

Antoinette: Oh, terrified. I mean I'm literally screaming on the inside. I'm like okay, God, what are we going to do? What do I say? He is going to and fro. He is telling me he hasn't taken his medicine. He's got a loaded gun! Terrified!

James: All right. Tell me what happened.

Antoinette: So then I'm sitting there and he now...

James: When did you call 911 by the way?

Antoinette: He actually tells the teacher to go out and let everybody know he is in the building. Now he is giving me demands on what to do. So he now tells me to call 911 and to call our news station for the helicopters to come. I know as plain as day -- I couldn't even think of one to call. I couldn't think of nobody. So he's like "Call them and let them know what is going on."

So I'm calling them and now I'm trying to get everything, his demands and everything that he wants to have done. Then in comes the cafeteria manager. He comes in bebopping around the corner, moving slowly.

Now the gunman gets agitated. So he fires his first shot in the room where I am, literally feet away from me. The bullet now ricochets all over the office. But God doesn't allow the bullet to hit any of us.

He now tells the cafeteria manager to go in and let them, everybody else know that he's gone. So I'm trying to sit there and figure, okay, why he ain't called my name? I want to go too! But for some reason he decides that he still wants me to stay there with him.

So I'm sitting there and he is now going to and fro, everywhere, saying he is going to kill us; he is now gone outside, shooting at the police. He empties his magazines. He now comes back in the building where I'm at, in the front office, gets his book bag. I'd seen the book bag but I didn't know what was in the book bag. He had so many bullets in there and magazines. He now sits in front of me in the chair and loads up the gun and all the magazines, puts all the magazines in his pockets, along with extra bullets, reloads the gun and now goes for World War II right there where I'm at.

James: Is 911 still open?

Antoinette: No. He tells me to hang up the phone. So what I did is I put the phone down so he's thinking that I hung up but in all reality the operator is hearing everything we're saying.

James: So what did you start saying because we're going to hear some of it again in a minute but what did you start doing?

Antoinette: I just start telling the 911 operator, whatever he said to me, I start repeating it so that she could actually have eyes on the inside because I know that my words right now were going to be life and death for all of us. So for me it was important that I actually told her everything that he was doing, what he was saying, what demands that he was saying.

So he's telling me to hang up thinking I'm not talking to anyone but in all reality the 911 operator was hearing everything I was saying.

James: When did God start telling you what to say to him?

Antoinette: From the moment he walked in the door.

James: But when did you start getting real specific and basically letting him know somehow there was some love flowing his way that was nothing but a miracle? When did all that start?

Antoinette: From the moment he walked in the door because I was terrified and I knew that I had to show him compassion and love. He was already unstable in all his ways.

I knew his pain because I had already felt the pain myself. I had tried to commit suicide myself months earlier so I knew where he was coming from. So I identified with his pain to allow him to know that I've been there and done that and actually got an outfit for it. So I wanted him to know that I understood the pain.

James: So you're actually telling him that.

Antoinette: Oh, yes!

James: We're going to hear some of the exchange. Can we hear some of that? Or listen to it. I want you to listen to some of this and then we're going to come back and pick this up. This is totally -- this little pleasant looking here, that wasn't what was there. But there's a holy grin and a holy smile all through Antoinette's life right now because she was part of something only God could do. There's no way somebody does what she did in the circumstances, and the miracle saved no telling how many lives. Listen to the exchange.

>> He said he should have just went to the mental hospital instead of doing this because he is not on his medication.

But do you want me to try -- I can help you if you want me -- you want to talk to them? You want me to talk to them and try to...

Okay, but let me talk to them and let's see if we can work it out so you don't have to go away with them for a long time.

No, it does matter. I can let them know that you have not tried to harm me or do anything with me or anything. That you want to...

But that doesn't make any difference. You didn't hit anybody.

Okay, let me ask you this, ma'am. He didn't hit anybody; he just shot outside the door. If I walk out there with him -- if I walk out there with him, they won't shoot him or anything like that? He wants to give himself up. Is that okay? They won't shoot him?

>> Yes, ma'am.

>> He said he just wants to go to the hospital.

>> Okay. Hold on one moment.

>> She said, hold on and she's going to talk to the police officer and I'll go out there with you.

Well, don't feel bad. My husband just left me after 33 years. But...

Yes, you do! I mean I'm sitting here with you and talking to you about it. I've got a son that is multiple disabled.

He said he doesn't have any more weapons.

So -- okay, he is on the ground now with his hands behind his back. Tell the officers, don't come in with any guns, don't come in shooting or anything so they can come on in and I'll buzz them in.

>> Okay.

>> So hold on. Just sit right there. I'm going to buzz them in so you'll know when they're coming. Okay? So just stay there calm.

Don't worry about it. I'm going to sit right here so they will see that you tried not to harm me. Okay? Okay.

>> Okay.

>> It's going to be all right, sweetie. I just want you to know that I love you though. I'm proud of you. That's a good thing that you've just given up and don't worry about it. We all go through something in life.

No, you don't want that. You're going to be okay. I thought the same thing. You know I tried to commit suicide last year after my husband left me but look at me now. I'm still working and everything is okay.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Thank you, God!

Don't you say thank God! He laid down there on the floor and you sat there by him telling him it was going to be all right. And I didn't hear any put on there. I honestly thought you were telling him he was loved; am I right about that?

Antoinette: Oh, yeah! I love him even today because he changed my life. I had nothing at that moment to live for and I know God allowed me to go through everything that I went through with my ex-husband leaving me, even with me having a child that is multiple disabled, even with my dad and abandonment issues and everything that I've gone through in my life, I know God prepared me for that moment to save those lives, including his.

Betty: Isn't that just like God? He is there with us if we'll recognize that and just do as he tells us to do.

Antoinette: See, he gave up his life. He laid there prostrate before the Lord with his hands behind his back. He put all his weapons, bullets, and everything that he came in -- and even his bottle of water on the counter beside me and laid there while I talked

him into allowing them to come in and get him.

James: Thank you, God! Do you realize the gratitude you may say I want for Antoinette but really the gratitude goes to God because it was so much bigger than her. That's what her story is about. She's been through so much pain but because she held on to God and God held on to her, the impossible happened -- the God of the impossible showed up in an impossible situation. Antoinette wants to go and share her testimony, and really, it is the testimony of God's grace she wants to share.

If someone wanted to communicate with you and say would you come to our church or our area –

By the way, if she comes take good care of her. Bless her, please! Don't wait for somebody else to take care of her. If she comes and pours out the love of God in your area, you take care of her. You bless her on her journey.

How would they get a hold of you?

Antoinette: They can go to my web site which is WWW.AntoinetteTuff.com. All right, and you see how it is spelled -- you see how Tuff is spelled? T-U-F-F... Not T-O-U-G-H -- real tough. I hope you'll look at the web site.

And Antoinette, I'm praying that God will open doors for you where you can just point people to the grace that really is so amazing -- it really is amazing grace, it is astonishing grace, it is overwhelming grace, it is uplifting grace, it is sufficient grace, it is ever-available grace.

And here is just a miracle. Think about this, she could have been full of bitterness and hate and hurt but you let the grace of God fill you to overflowing and you loved somebody that came in there to do everybody great harm. And you see the supernatural aspect of God putting you where you were and the things you went through where you could let him teach you and now you want go as you're doing in the book, you want to go share that love with others.

Antoinette: Yes! I want to be able to travel all around the world and be able to save some lives and save some souls.

James: Well, you're trying to do something that we do here with your outreach and

that is to help underprivileged children. You are actually too, trying to help them learn how to do something with their life, like skills; is that not right?

Antoinette: Yes. We actually through this, we actually started a nonprofit, which is Kids on the Move for Success. So what we do is we give students educational opportunities that otherwise don't have one. We just gave away our Scholarship of the Trumpet Awards for a student to be able to go to college. We just helped a single mom to be able to send her child overseas and to be able to travel around the world to be able to get educational opportunities.

So for me, if I can stop one from thinking that they have to be another Michael Hill is all worth it for me to be able to know that at the end of the day God loves them and so do I!

James: Well, if they go to your web site are you telling about all of this, like the foundation, to help children too? Is that all there where they can see that?

Antoinette: Yes, my nonprofit organization web site is actually getting up now and it is actually KidsOnTheMoveForSuccess.org.

James: All right, and we've got that on the screen. But on LifeToday.org we, and also in the phone center when you call, we try to have all the information in case you didn't get it down.

But I'm telling you, this is the kind of miracle we need. We need a lot of miracles like this in our nation. There is so many tragic things that happen and there is so much evil that puts pressure on people, but here's an example of love being received by someone who was filled with murderous thoughts. I believe if we will live full of that love of God, and if we will let that river of life and love flow freely just like she did, I believe we're going to see miracles everywhere.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to this incredibly blessed woman? What a joy! The glory of God is on her countenance. The book is in the bookstores. What a story!

Antoinette, I'm going to let you look in with us on a beautiful gifted singer, musician, wonderful Christian, missionary worker with us who lost her husband, who was basically like a professional swimmer and he drowned. But oh, the glory of God that's on this incredible girl! Listen to God through her on the mission fields with our team. Here's Tammy.

Begin video clip

Tammy: When we walk into these villages they basically are just looking at us asking, "Can you help? Can you do something? We need help!"

>> She is saying like we don't have another one. What to do? We need to use this one.

Announcer: For children of poverty, gathering at a pond or a stream to have fun is not the reason they are there. It's for the purpose of survival. Without water, these children and their families would not live more than a week. And when they have no other choice but to drink contaminated water, illness, and all too often death become the bitter consequence of that inescapable choice.

Tammy: Not one child has ever said, "The water is perfect, the water is great! I'm feeling fine." Child after child, same story, they're struggling.

Announcer: Our mission teams have spoken with heartbroken families from Cambodia in the heart of Asia, to Madagascar on the east coast of Africa, in rural villages of Central America and India, whose children's waterborne illnesses were so severe they died before anything could be done to save them. So massive is the problem of contaminated water that every 20 seconds a child dies from a waterborne illness.

Tammy: Time is of essence. There's hundreds of thousands of children dying every year because of contaminated water. Let's change that for them. Let's be the change. Let's do something now. Let's not wait 'til it's too late -- 'til we lose another child who can't do anything about it -- 'til we lose another family. We can do something now. We have an opportunity to be life to so many people who need it so desperately through fresh clean water.

End of clip**In the studio**

James: I know that we cannot meet every need. We can't heal every pain. We can't even touch all human pain but we can help some. And we've been able to join with you, viewers of *LIFE Today* and friends of *LIFE* all over the world who have literally said, "We're going to reach out with the hands of Jesus and touch those people. We're going to show them love; we're not just going to tell them about it or proclaim it or even preach it." We'll do that but we're going to give them a demonstration of love.

So here's what we've been doing now, Betty, for years. And you and I have had such a joy from the beginning, not only of going and finding the need but also of giving to meet the need.

When we first started drilling wells they were \$3600 for a well. Costs have gone up, they're \$4800. That's still incredibly reasonable; it's almost miraculous as the average cost. But we asked God to let us give a well and we've been able to do it. And sometimes, to be honest with you, we've given several in a year because we said, "God, enable us to be able to do that." We made it a prayer goal but it always starts with just a little.

You can't believe how many people started giving \$48, and then after several years they were able to give \$1200 and they prayed that three join us. We've had incredible stories! Children who said, "We want to help," and they go to raise money for a well, little kids -- little Bible study groups. But what normally happens, couples, individuals will say, "I'm going to do my part expressing the love and the heart of God."

And Tammy showed us all those children all around the world. We're going to join and we're going to help drill a well. This year we're drilling 500 -- we're halfway there! We need to complete the 250 and we've got hard-hit areas right now that's really serious where there are droughts and terrible conditions and even the meager water sources they had are depleted and gone.

So I'm asking you if you would help us drill a well. If you can drill a well, \$4800; write a check, use your bankcard. Call the number and say, "I'm giving a well." Or "I'm giving part of a well -- \$1200 or \$2400. Please! Or you can go to LifeToday.org and make the gift.

But most of our friends, Betty, most of the money comes from people who give \$48, that gives ten people water, or \$144, as an example, gives 30 people water; that's where most of the support comes. So if you think because I can't give a well, or a fourth of a well, whatever you can do... Think about it, for ten people -- it's a miracle for the children of parents that you saw who had lost their children.

We saw a couple sitting there by little mounds of dirt where family members were buried -- children! Would you dial the number or go online right now please?

Father, I pray every person who can help will do it and do it gladly; in Jesus' name.

Thank you for making that call. We have some beautiful gifts to send you to bless the children you love to help you journal on your journey and to be a blessing in your home. Thank you for giving life-giving water, giving even more than a cup of water in Jesus' name. Thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children of all ages are forced to make a dreadful choice: Drink filthy polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision!

The good news is there is a solution. *Mission: Water for Life* is one of the most effective life-saving demonstrations of God's love you could ever be a part of. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today, you can help establish and drill 500 new water wells for remote villages impacting over 20 nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10 people. \$72 will impact 15 people! And \$144 will help provide fresh clean disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift, be sure to request the new *Children at the Well* interactive book to help your little ones understand the blessing of clean water, as well as the *Women at the Well* daily devotional with 32 refreshing devotionals for your quiet time. With your gift of \$100 or more you may request this beautiful leather journal to help capture your personal times with God.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and you may request our commemorative sculpture glass statue "The Blessing."

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: We've got the beautiful gifts and the journal we mentioned but if you'd like to have Antoinette's incredible story and the pictures -- the Anderson Cooper program on C.N.N. where she talked about it, what a place to go and be a witness for Christ!

They did a really good job sharing it. And just to see the whole story of the miracle of all the hundreds of lives that were likely saved because the grace of God came on someone who had been through a lot of pain.

So if you'd like to have the book and you help us, you just help us give a cup of water, give a well, give a part of it and give some water in Jesus' name. If you want the book, we'll gladly send it to you.

Join Betty and me again telling Antoinette how much we thank God.

And thank you, Antoinette, you're beautiful! Jesus looks good in you! And you look good dressed up in Jesus.

Thank all of you so much for watching. Encourage others to watch *LIFE Today*! Let people know about it. Would you? Thank all of you!