

7/7/14

Week 28: WFL

Carson Tinker

James: Well, we welcome you. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have you watching *LIFE Today*. Here you know we're Texas folks but I am holding a Crimson Tide football player's book. They've only won a few national championships. They've had a few disappointments you will admit -- surprising disappointments frankly. Here is a book by their deep snapper who was part of that national championship team in what he calls *A Season to Remember*; and the subheading is: Faith in the midst of the storm.

Now understand, this is about as serious as you can get because this is one of the most, if not the most severe series of thunderstorm and tornadic activity, perhaps in history when scores and scores of people were killed and over 50 killed right here where Carson, the football player, the deep snapper for this championship team found himself with his girlfriend and other friends. This is the story of faith in the midst of the storm. It is not easy to retell but you see because when you really have faith and you're facing all the fierce assault that life and sometimes challenges and even tragedies can throw your way, you're going to have the faith that enables you to endure the storm.

Would you welcome Carson Tinker to *LIFE Today*? Carson, good to have you.

Carson: Yes, sir! Thanks for having me.

James: And we will be able to have enough grace to have this Crimson Tide representative in the Texas... with all these Texas teams. I want you to know and I just say this to Nick Saban, what a leader you are! We had Bear Bryant here for a while in our state. Boy, he was tough! Then he came your way -- incredible legacy.

We love you, Alabama. You're my favorite state to crusade in; I think many of you know that.

Carson, you've told quite a story here. I know you want to talk about what's happened after the incredible storm that I just referenced as a weather phenomenon. I want you to tell us what happened, where you were that night, what took place and the impact that it had on your life and how you dealt with it, and then what happened after that. And what you really want everyone who gets this book, and it would be so wonderful, it would be great if every athlete would read it, it would be great for everybody that has an athlete in the family, everybody that has a challenge, a storm; but tell us what happened that tragic night.

Carson: Yes, sir. Well, as you can probably imagine, I really don't like talking about it but I go in every detail I can in the book because I've realized that only the wounded have the power to heal. That's my mission is to help people through this book. So it starts with the day of the tornado, me and my roommate, we're on the front porch and we were just seeing if we could find the tornado. We had seen on the news where tornados were coming through but nobody thinks that it's going to happen to them. It's always the neighborhood on the other side of town or someone in the county -- it's never you.

But we were looking out there and the sky was just green but we couldn't see anything because the tornado was behind us. My grandfather calls me and says, "Carson, take shelter." He was being as serious as he is. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have never even gone in the closet. But I said, "Yes, sir. Yes, sir granddaddy." My two roommates and the girl, (my girlfriend I was dating at the time,) and our dogs, (we had two dogs,) we all got in the closet. I still...

James: Were you hearing anything before you went into the closet or was it strictly because you got a call?

Carson: Yes, sir, it was because my granddad called me.

James: He saw something, he felt like was really headed in the proximity of where you were.

Carson: I think God was talking to him because we were watching TV, we thought we knew where the tornado was but yeah, it was because my granddad called me. I was in the closet cracking jokes; I still wasn't taking it seriously. But then we could hear our house being pulled apart. It is a noise I'll never forget. I was like, "Man, this is serious!" The next thing I remember is waking up across the street in a field that we had. What had happened was the tornado literally picked the house up and threw it across the street. I was thrown about 70 or 80 yards.

James: Were the others in the closet scattered in that field or did some of them end up elsewhere?

Carson: We were all spread out. I mean some of us were thrown further than others. But we immediately started looking for everybody and rounding everyone up. I found...

James: Weren't you injured? Didn't you get hit pretty hard yourself?

Carson: Yes, sir. I had a concussion, a severe concussion, broke my wrist. It looked like...

James: Is that what the scar is from?

Carson: Yes, sir. Right here.

James: Now did you know when you hit and did that or were you unconscious when you slammed it?

Carson: I was unconscious; I was knocked completely unconscious. The last thing I remember was just getting pulled out. You know like the dreams you have where you're falling down but it was like but the opposite. I was just on a mission to find

everybody though. I didn't want to focus on the injuries or anything like that. But my wrist, concussion, and it looked like someone had took like a nine iron and took a divot out of my leg. They think something wrapped around it and pulled a chunk out of my leg. I found one of my roommates and we were trying to find my girlfriend. We couldn't find her. We searched for about 15 minutes until --

James: What was her name?

Carson: Her name was Ashley -- Ashley Harrison, she is from Dallas. But we searched for her and our neighbors came and got us and took us to the hospital. I ended up in the hospital for about five days. But the next day, I found out that Ashley didn't make it; that she died of a broken neck.

James: How did that affect you when you found out? Because I'm sure you were probably holding on to her?

Carson: Yeah, I was holding on to her as tight as I could. I was devastated.

James: Do you somehow feel responsible in something like that, that you could have done something different?

Carson: The whole day we said that if tornados happened that we're going to our neighbor's house; they had a basement and stuff like that. No one was living there at the time. So we were just going to figure out how we can go through a window or something if it got serious. But we didn't do that. Our neighbor's house, they had a basement and the house actually collapsed on top of the basement; so all of us would have been crushed, most likely. It is just one of those things that it is what it is.

I made a choice in the hospital... I was in the hospital for about five days and in the hospital I made a choice that it was God's plan. I mean Jeremiah 29:11, there is words like "prosper" and "plan" and "not to harm" but "easy" is not in that verse. The word *easy* is not in there; that's something that I learned. It is not an easy way but it is a part of God's plan. That is something I bought into and something that I believe to this day. But I believed from day one. I never asked why, I asked what. What do you want me

to learn from this? What do you have in store for me? I firmly believe that this is what I'm supposed to be doing now.

Second Corinthians 1:4 says God gives you peace so you can give that peace to others. That's why I wanted to write a book. Kind of my mantra has been some people ask for blessings but I ask that I can be a blessing. I wanted to be a blessing through this book; I wanted to help people. Like I said, I talk about all the negative stuff but that's because I want people to see the darkest time of my life and how God took that and used it for good. Everybody has a circumstance. I literally went through a storm, but everyone has storms in their lives, family getting sick, debt -- there are so many different circumstances. But you can live in circumstance or you can live in vision and I chose to live in vision. This is my vision right here.

The tornado was about three years ago and I remember laying in that bed thinking that I wanted to do something like this. I want to be able to inspire people. I want to be able to challenge people. I want to be able to encourage people. I'm living my vision. I'm not being defined by my circumstance; I'm not being defined by that tornado. I want to be defined by my vision and this is it. I'm so excited to be here. I'm fired up.

Betty: You made the choice to go forward rather than to let...

Carson: It was a choice that I had to make every day. Sometimes I had to make it two or three times a day. Like I said, Jeremiah 29:11: I've got a plan for you to prosper and not to harm; but the word *easy* is not in that verse and it is a hard choice. But I made myself -- I had an I-will-not-be-denied attitude. I made that choice. Every time I felt bad, I was like, God has a plan for you.

James: You are now playing for Jacksonville. You're deep snapper there. You are excited about the opportunities. You have a lot of great Christians in Jacksonville; I preached there a lot. I love you folks there. I hope you have a great year. But what do you want to see God doing and what are some of the things you're doing there? How can our viewers pray for you and encourage you or even participate in some of the things God's put on your heart?

Carson: Well, like I said, my mantra has just been I want to be a blessing in people's lives, however. I just started a 501 C 3 nonprofit organization that's called: To Be a Blessing Foundation where we want to take just individual stories and figure out how we can help them, of people going through circumstance and figure out how we can help them live in vision.

James: If people want to communicate with you to find out how they can participate, they can be a part of some particular outreach that you focus on, and you may need some manpower. There may be people who are impressed to help you financially. What kind of web site do you have where they can find out how they can be a part of it or find out what you're doing?

Carson: It is BeABlessingNow.com.

James: BeABlessingNow.com. I hope you'll check that out. I think one of the things you know about life and it is if you don't know it, well, let's just going ahead and settle it. We are about serving and encouraging others. We encourage our viewers to do that. We want you to know we appreciate the way you enable life to share life. But we also share people who are full of the life of God, we let you know what God is leading them to do to see if he is leading you to partner with them or be a part of it. We don't think you have to be protected as a supporter, a donor or a person who prays. We trust that you are going to be led by God. So check out that web site; check out what he's doing.

What do you think someone will get if they do go through the book? What do you think is going to happen? Because I know you sat down and you wrote about the painful things and the challenges and you did have an incredible season because when you start with those storms but you end with a national championship, I mean you've really paid a price to achieve that particular goal. But when somebody reads the book, what do you hope will happen to them when they get through reading the story that you've shared?

Carson: I hope that no matter where you are in life, if you're at the very bottom like I

was after the tornado, or if you feel like you're at the very top like maybe where I was after the national championship, that you can get something out of it. I talk about my personal journey through the hardships and overcoming adversity and fighting it and fighting adversity.

But also I tie in part of the season and some of the life lessons that I learned from Coach Saban, which I think that everybody learns life lessons from a great football coach or a great coach. I've read books about John Wooden and Bobby Bowden and Coach Bryant. I'm hoping that people can get a glimpse of how Coach Saban is. People see him on the media and they think he is a tough guy but Coach Saban is a great guy and I've learned so much from him in terms of football but also that is going to help me for the rest of my life, talking about the process, and attention to details and the choices you make. I really figured out how I can tie it all in to my personal journey, and even, the different heroes in the Bible too. It's just crazy how everything just kind of came together for me.

Betty: I feel like your testimony and what you experienced through that season showed the faithfulness of God in your life. Like you said, life is not always easy. If we live, any of us, very long we're going to experience heartache at different times, tragedy -- different things. But if we hang on to God and really let him work good out of such tragedies then that's when "The Blessing" comes in life and we can really show people how faithful God is to us.

Carson: Everyone says that they trust God but do you trust that God allowed what's going on in your life? Do you trust that God allowed the bad things that happen in your life to turn you into the man you're supposed to be or the Christian you're supposed to be, or the husband or the son or the daughter, or the friend? I feel like I wouldn't be where I am here today if it wasn't for that tornado -- if it wasn't for the storm that I had and what God taught me through that. There is no easy way to learn that. You've got to do a trial by fire. That's what I believe.

John 9:3, it talks about when Jesus and his disciples were walking from city to city and they saw a blind guy. And his disciples said, "Jesus, why is that guy blind? Is it

something he did, or is it something that his family did, or some kind of sin? And Jesus said, "No, that guy is blind so he can see what God can do for him."

That's why I went through that tornado so I could see what God can do for me. That's why I wanted to write a book so people could see that it is not meant to harm, it is meant to prosper; it's all part of a plan and it is a God plan. Before there was you there was a God thing for you to do, and that's something that I bought into. That's something that I've had faith in since day one. It's been awesome -- it's been an awesome ride!

James: It takes incredible pressure to create a diamond and you'll never see a clay object become a treasure that is not under pressure for it to be shaped, and the same is true of our lives. Don't you see the remarkable grace of God in Carson's life? Can y'all see that? We do, Carson. We believe that God is going to bless you. I don't know whether you guys are going to go win a championship; I think you're going to play Dallas. That ought to be a snap.

Carson: We play Dallas in London.

[Laughter]

James: Good! We're far enough away it won't have to hurt quite as bad.

Betty: We might give them a little challenge.

James: I'm horsing around with you, Cowboys. But I would like you to be real Cowboys. Here is the book that is in the stores or you can get it online. I will tell you this, Carson, what we're going to do, we're doing our best right now and you're going to see something that will move you very, very deeply in a moment. We're going to do our best to give water to people who've never had clean water and they lose their family members, they lose their children and they lose their health and we can correct it as simply as drilling a well, and just providing a way for precious children and their families to get it. I know you're going to be excited about it. I want you to watch

closely because I believe you're going to be moved to reach out with the very hands of God and perform a miracle of love. Watch this very closely.

On the mission field

Open captions:

>> When my brother and sister died, I didn't know and I looked for them everywhere.

>> I've had five children but in the same month, two of my children died. One was three years old and the other one 13 months old.

>> When my mother told me they died, I didn't believe her. I kept crying and looking for them.

>> It's too painful to think about. I'm starting to lose my mind. I'm afraid because we still use the same water, and the water might cause my other children to die too.

>> The only water we have is from the pond. I'm afraid I might die like my brother and sister did.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, a picture says so much more than words. I don't even -- I don't even feel like I can add anything to it. I just pray God, that beautiful little child won't have to live afraid -- that mother hurt; in Jesus' name. Boy, I don't ever have to lose a child to understand what that would feel like. It's not something any parent ever wants to feel or experience but those people do continuously. It is just -- it's almost unbearable pain but we can correct it. It is not like -- it is not even like St. Jude's, the wonderful work they do but they're looking so often for a cure they can't seem to find. Betty, we found the cure.

Betty: That's right, James! And this precious mother, she knows what killed her two babies, and she knows the possibility of losing all her babies if something is not done. This is something we can help with; this is something we can change by drilling the

water wells so that they can have clean water. That little precious sibling there lost her brother and her sister and she said she kept looking for them and they weren't there. To me, that's so sad and it didn't have to be. Well, we can stop things like that from happening to these children. Please join with us and help us.

James: I believe, Betty with all my heart you will help. Here, let me just put it just as plain and simple as I can. If you would give up from where you are and just go and get your bankcard to use it like a check, or go and get a check, and make it to *LIFE* and say, "I want to help give water." Or take your bankcard and call the number or go to LifeToday.org online and use that card like a check, which is how you should always use it and make the largest gift you can because you'll be giving the greatest gift, you'll be giving life, plus the fact that we're going to point people to the life of God in Christ that inspired that expression of love so it is eternal impact, not just present-day enriching of the individual circumstances.

So I'm asking you please, to take that card, or write a check and understand this, a well costs \$4800. If there's any way you can do that, I believe you'll do it. Would you? What an exciting thing to know I can do it.

Many of you have prayed you can do it or give \$1200 and pray three join you or \$2400 and pray another person joins you. Whatever you can do, do it but keep this in mind because this is where most of the support comes. We're targeting 500 areas for wells in 20 countries. \$48 will give ten people water the rest of their life; that's how it breaks out; \$144 will give 30. We're asking you right now, please, simply move to the phone or online and let's give all the water and all the help you can provide. Would you do that?

We have some beautiful gifts for the children you love that will inspire them, inspirational stories: Women at the Well, Children at the Well, and we have an incredible journal. It's been such a blessing to so many that we'd love to send you; plus the beautiful glass artwork if you'll help us drill a large portion of a well or a well. Thank you so much.

Father, I pray every person who can give will gladly do it right now. In Jesus' name, I thank you.

Thank you for answering a mother's prayer like the one you saw and a little sibling's prayer. Thank you!

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

On the mission field

James: This mother has four children. Last summer a year ago, they had an outbreak of intestinal disease from contaminated water. Two of her children got very, very sick.

Now she's got a little baby just a few months old and this baby is living on her mother's milk, this baby is nursing. Betty, pretty soon this little baby is going to be drinking that water and oftentimes it takes their lives.

Betty: It really does, James. And they can't do anything about it because it's all the water they have. I can't even imagine! This little baby is so precious, so beautiful! Do you know that there is 10,000 people a day that die from the waterborne diseases, and most of them are children five and under? We can stop that. We can make the difference by doing the water wells and giving them a fresh cup of water.

James: I'd like you to be one of the hands to reach out and dial the telephone number and take your bankcard and use it like a check or write a check and make it to *LIFE* and say "I want to give life to children like this and keep them healthy."

End of clip

In the studio

James: We thank you so much. We are sending you the beautiful testimony, *Women at the Well*. Many of the guests, many of the women that we've had here that you love so much. And then *Children at the Well* -- this is just great! Boy, what a treasure for little children and for grandkids.

And then if you'd like to have it, what a blessing, Carson Tinker's book will be, *A Season to Remember*; Faith in the midst of the storm. We all have them. It will be a blessing. You help us give water and we're going to bless you by sending you his book if you'd like to it.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Carson again.

Carson, have a great year! Take it easy on the Cowboys, okay? Cut us some slack; will you?

Thank all of you so much for watching *LIFE Today* and for helping us share life.