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Week 43: Rescue Life

Samuel Rodriguez #1

James: Sammy Rodriguez is here. I'm James Robison. My wife, Betty and I welcome Sammy Rodriguez.

I'm just thinking. You know what? I never do read off all of these things about his incredible title and all the things he does. He is the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. He has a tremendous church in California, New Season Christian Worship Center in Sacramento. He's been on all these different news shows, but you know what I think about with Sammy? I think about a man that has been sent by God with a message from God who has the heart of God, the passion and fire of God, and the love of God for all the people Jesus gave his life to redeem. He really believes that it's not too late.

Betty, one of the things Sammy says to me all the time is, "I'm not drinking the KOOL-AID." In other words, I'm not going to drink the suicide juice because we think it is hopeless. What do you mean by that?

Welcome Sammy Rodriguez to *LIFE Today*.

Sammy, glad to have you back.

Sammy: Thank you!

James: When you're not drinking the KOOL-AID, what are you talking about?

Sammy: When I'm not drinking the KOOL-AID...

First of all, I love you both.

James: You too, buddy!

Sammy: I need to say this. Some time ago, I forget about a year and a half maybe, we had an experience at Gateway; the power of God truly descended and affirmed us. I am seeing what God is doing in my life but because I am covered by spiritual parents, and thank you for adopting me -- and I really mean that. My love and my affinity for you both is without compromise. I thank you because my generation was raised, spiritually speaking, to a great degree fatherless; to hear your voice for such a time as this, thank you. Thank you for believing in our generation.

I'm not drinking the Kool-Aid; this idea that this is it -- that God is done with us -- that God is done with this generation of America, for that matter, I'm not drinking it. This sense of despair and hopelessness, and with great due deference to those that suffer from mental illness, (I have many in my family who do,) but the idea that the church is a depressed church and a church that is right now so down-and-out that there is no hope, I'm not drinking that.

I believe that we are the precipice of a fresh awakening; that we stand at the precipice of a move of God like we have never seen before. I am even convinced that our children and our children's children will be part of a revival that will not only change America but it will change the entire world for the glory of Christ alone. So I'm not drinking the KOOL-AID.

For those that have stated that we're done, we're not done -- we're just getting started.

James: And we're not looking for an escape route. We're not looking for an escape hatch, we're not looking for an upward taker; we want the one who will come ultimately for the church that looks like him that is literally filled with his glory, that will be a fit bride. We are looking for that revelation of Jesus to the people of God, then through the people of God to the world where they will behold his glory in us as people who love him and love our neighbor.

Sammy: Well, he's not coming back for a broken church -- he's not coming back for a defeated church -- he's coming back for a glorious church -- that's the church of Jesus Christ.

James: Absolutely! So you talk about the vertical and horizontal relationship; we look up to God but the cross also says we're looking out to others. Our ministry –

By the way, the Lamb's Agenda is a phenomenal book. The message God's given him on the Lamb's agenda. He says it is not the agenda of the donkey or the elephant. By the way, we are facing an election. Every election is important from the local level to the highest national level.

Sammy, is it important for people who say they love God and care about others to participate intelligently, wisely, and let's say consistently with conviction in the political process? Where those chosen will determine the policies and the burdens that are put upon the people or the blessings that they can bestow when the righteous rule, were blessed; is it important for people to really be involved?

Sammy: Absolutely! Cultural reformation -- if that's what we're seeking -- requires political engagement as an act of prophetic witness, which means I don't vote because of my political ideology or my party affiliation. I must vote as an extension of my Christian worldview. I'm walking into that voting booth not as a Latino or Hispanic-American, Irish-American, Italian-American; I'm walking in there as a child of the living God, as a redeemed child of God. It is not my cultural context that dictates my vote it must be what the Word of God says. Soliscriptolus veritas, the Word of God, eternal truth. So we really must understand this, that today's complacency is tomorrow's captivity.

James: And that's the absolute historical irrefutable proof.

Sammy: We can't deny that. The church of Jesus, the Christ followers still have the power in America to shift things politically if we vote according to our biblical worldview.

I don't say this to be offensive at all but my primary optic when I'm going there -- and by the way, voting is critical because then we see the emergence of moral relativism

and cultural decadence. We see laws and legislative policies that attempt to dilute the platforms by which we amplify our Christian faith.

In other words, there is an attempt, believe it or not, to silence Christians in America. There is a war against our Judeo-Christian value system. And we speak against terrorist groups that are doing so many horrific things to our brothers and sisters in Christ and other religious minorities around the world but in our own nation, from a political standpoint, from a legislative standpoint or a public policy standpoint there is an attempt to silence Christendom. There is an attempt!

What we believe is counter to the majority culture at this moment. So how do we change that? -- Via the conduit of prayer, of making sure that we reconcile righteousness with justice. But making sure we vote biblical worldview. I can't vote the color of my skin and I can't vote my socioeconomic background. I must vote vertical. I must advance the Lamb's agenda.

James: You've got to look to God and do what he says. We have a responsibility. I don't understand how anyone can shun that responsibility because of all the mistakes that have been made, we don't dismiss ourselves. You may say well, if you don't vote, you actually are voting. You are handing the future off to the zealous ones and it is interesting that the enemy of light, the enemy of truth, the enemy of what our founders supernaturally established for us and a really sound foundation upon which freedom could stand and we could move forward in a very positive and a very fruitful fashion, they are actually saying that that must be removed, diminished, discarded, scrapped and replaced. And they are zealous. They will stand together from all their different diverse backgrounds to tear down the foundation upon which this great nation stood while the people who say they believe all these things can somehow count themselves out, step back, call themselves looking for the return of the Lord, get out of here, "Well, you know we deserve what's coming" rather than sowing the seed of positive fruitfulness that love produces.

I'm telling you, Sammy, if we go down, it will be because the church refused to stand against the gates of hell.

Sammy: And again, the number one problem in America today is not moral relativism or cultural decadence, it is a lukewarm church -- so it's a lukewarm church.

Addressing the issue of politics, we're not called to be democrat or republican, we are called to be holy, to be light. We're called to be fruitful, to be still and know that God is God. I demonstrate that belief by making sure that for my children and my children's children's sake that the very value system that has made America so exceptional -- and America is exceptional -- because we have this radical idea from our founding fathers that it is God over man, and man over government. And that's the pecking order; it is: God, man, and government. And when government grows, man and God have to come out of the way. So it's God over man and man over government and that's the order -- that's the order. That's what makes us exceptional.

That system right now is discombobulated. More people are depending on Uncle Sam than on Jesus Christ. And God bless -- we have a great foundation, a great history but I've stated this in some of our public conferences, Uncle Sam may be my uncle but he will never be my heavenly Father. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

And when we have a generation emerging dependent on government for absolutely everything, well, government is replacing God! When we look to Uncle Sam for every single solution, from health care, from the womb to the tomb, from cradle to grave, for everything, we depend upon government for our salvation and we're moving God out of the way. We need an awakening.

And we engaged a political process not as the alpha and the omega, the catch-all of all of our problems, but it is a critical instrument that we must engage in. These elections are so critical because by the way, there has to be continuity. We can't preach biblical truth on Sunday and then vote for a candidate that does not believe in the biblical truth we preached about on Sunday. We can't do that!

[Applause]

This is really become -- it is controversial. It will be the first time I ever make a controversial comment.

James: On a program that is never controversial. Go for it!

Sammy: So the fact of the matter is it is hypocritical. If we preach the Bible on Sunday and we vote for a candidate on Tuesday that runs counter to a biblical worldview, that's hypocrisy. It is hypocrisy, there is lack of continuity.

I would argue theologically -- theologically with a strong commitment to biblical orthodoxy, we are very much -- it's fodder. We're surrendering truth on the altar of political expediency, and truth should never be sacrificed on the altar of political, cultural, or sexual expediency. Truth must always be elevated and shared with love.

Betty: Excuse me. Do you think the reason that a lot of the church has not come forward and stepping out in courage that comes only from God, is because they're fearful of losing everything they've established?

Sammy: I don't know if it is fear. I think it is an issue more of mirrors and windows. I think the church in America, right now, we have acquiesced to the mirror theology. The mirror theology is it is all about me: My blessing, my breakthrough, my prosperity, my health, my everything. While there is a big window of a suffering world out there, of generations literally dying without the hope of Christ; and we're so into ourselves that it's all about a mirror.

When Christianity is both/and it is a mirror to understand how lost we are and we need Christ but he changes me so I can change the world, and he heals me so I can heal others. So I look at that mirror so I can look at the bigger window of a suffering world. We're suffering from religious and cultural myopia. We need to shake that off. We need to understand there are those that are suffering. We are losing an entire generation.

Our Judeo-Christian value system is under great threat this very hour and what we do will determine whether or not this Christian faith can be preached for generations to

come in our nation. So it's not hyperbole, it's not exuberant rhetoric, it is the reality that we must shake off the very relativistic, the very complacent, uncomfortable idea. We want people to be comfortable -- but there is no such thing as comfortable Christianity! There is no such animal as comfortable Christianity! God doesn't want us comfortable -- he wants us passionate! Passionate! -- Passionate with love and with truth and with grace and with mercy. Compassionate for such a time as this.

James: How did you get this fire in your heart?

Sammy: I was 14 years old, I sensed a strong calling and I really experienced it that somehow we needed to reconcile Billy Graham's message with Dr. King's march. And if we can do both, reconcile the vertical and horizontal. When I was 14, I wrote it down on the inside cover of my Bible. Here we are today. I want to change the world but not with some sort of messianic complex even though I was raised in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania -- little town of Bethlehem.

[Laughter]

But notwithstanding, I really want to change the world. I think that I have this crazy belief system, I still believe that Jesus saves. And that he delivers and that heals and that he's coming back again. I still believe this. I experience it every single day in lives around me. This gospel still works. How about this? There's still power in the name of Jesus.

[Applause]

There really is!

James: And there is a personal relationship that goes so far beyond the stagnant, stifling, religion that most people put on. Religion really is -- it not only helped kill Jesus, it's destroying his message today, and it is diminishing the power of the redemptive life that he offers freely. We really can get stuck.

And that's where I see so many people and it breaks my heart that there's not excitement and life and zeal coming out of so many churches that are more like a mortuary than they are like a sanctuary of God. We really are the sanctuary but you've got buildings filled with empty people that don't have any zeal or power. I really want to say, "Wake up! Wake up!"

I used to preach at First Baptist Church Dallas when Dr. Criswell was there and he would always want me to preach. He was never not there when I was there. And I was preaching at First Baptist, I'm probably in my mid 20s, and I said, "Dr. Criswell, I want you to leave the platform and go sit out front. I want you to sit out here and listen to me because you need it too!" And people laughed, and they kind of clapped, and he sat down. And I got to going, really going. And I got so fired up, I ran down in front of Dr. Criswell and I grabbed the man next to him, I said, "Dr. Criswell, I'm so sick and tired of these dead deacons and dead members. I want to grab them by the lapels and just shake them and say, 'Wake up!'"

And Dr. Criswell said, "Me too! Me too! Me too!"

[Laughter]

You know what? I'm telling you, listen, man, nearly 50 years later I'm still saying, "Church wake up! Come alive." Jesus is alive but he has to reveal his life through us. I'm telling you, this is the day the Lord has made, rejoice and be glad in it but be light and salt. I am literally praying and pleading with people to become what Christ commissioned you to be, light, illuminate the way, expose the error of the way that leads to darkness and despair and defeat and debt and depravity and all the misery, and show the way of light and life. Become the shining city set on a hill. You know we can be a shining city if we just light this little spot, if we're not willing to stand with others.

I think one of the greatest miracles that Jesus prayed for and the world is waiting to see is not a compromise of our theological positions or recognition that we differ but the fact that we can let him lift us above the differences, not to compromise basics of faith or even say we don't agree with you on some points but still be family and be

healthy and become the shining city set on a hill. I think that's what the world is waiting to see, I think it's what God is waiting to see and that's what we're praying for.

Sammy: From a denominational standpoint, from an African standpoint, and I say this respectfully, let the day come in America in my generation where I'm able to see it where we no longer will even have the verbiage or the nomenclature to say there is a white church or a black church or a brown church, but rather than one church, the church of Jesus Christ coming together for such a time as this. Just one church -- one body -- one faith -- one mission -- one Lord! That's our call and decree.

James: And if you want to see congress behave, unlike churches are behaving, let churches change the way they behave and begin to converse with God and one another in a really sanctified manner for the good of the people.

The big message that we've got to deliver from both the church and from those who want to lead, we have your best interest, not ours. We care about what's best for you. You know every good father, every good parent wants the best for their children. Father God not only wants the best for all of us, he knows the best for all of us. And we the people of God, and we ought to be seeking leaders of God that want the absolute best for you; not their party, not their position, not protecting their turf or their interest, but we really care about others.

Sammy, you and I literally are yoked together in the yoke with the Lord to try to call the church to begin to express the life of Christ and we want to see the Lamb's agenda.

Would you join with us in prayer and say, let's pray that happens and we, the people of God, are going to take a stand? We're going to look, not only to God but look out at others and touch them. Would you out here say, "We're in. Count us in"?

And all of you who are watching, would you say we're going to pray for God to awaken the church and to correct our nation's perilous course and get us back on track.

I would love to send you *The Lamb's Agenda*. It is absolutely fabulous. I'm going to be talking to Sammy again.

Sammy, we have been called of God to put his arms around the people that suffer. And it is a tragic fact that many children all over the world are being taken captive, hostage, literally, in slavery to sexual bondage and turned over to predators. It is one of the saddest realities.

But let me tell you something, the love of God can change everything. I want you to look at a model who was trafficked, who was trapped, who was used and now her broken heart; and now as a missionary partner with us reaching out to put God's arms around those who have been trapped and sold into bondage.

Together -- listen to me -- we can lift them up out of that trap, out of that pit of defeat. We can rescue them and restore them. Would you help? Watch closely.

On the mission field

Giselle: Behind me you can see the beautiful mountains of Nepal, this beautiful lake, this amazing land here.

But what you don't see is that little children are being lost. Little girls are being tricked and trafficked and all around us all day long we're losing our children from here. This isn't just happening here; this is happening all over the world every day. Women and children being completely forced and tricked into a life of sexual slavery -- the little girls, their innocence being completely robbed from them.

I share the pain of all these little girls. Not being able to play, not being able to do all the things that we want our children to do; all of that robbed from them. When I was 14 years old, I was tricked and I was trafficked.

I'm so blessed to be able to be here. I got out. These women that we work with, they were not able to escape. They're trapped. We want to do everything that we can do. I want to do everything that I can do to help these women to have the life that they

deserve, to have the life that God wanted them to have but I can't do this by myself. Together we can give them opportunity, give them freedom and be able to put those smiles back on their faces.

End of clip

In the studio

James: We thank God for what he's done in Giselle's life. It is a miracle. And she has not only gone into those areas, and with us and with the support to help establish centers like *LIFE* Centers and a place, a haven of safety and security. But she, Betty, has been able to teach these women that we've been able to get out or head off before they're trapped into a trade to teach them how to make a living, to teach them how to provide for their own future and that security.

So it is a true love extension to not only rescue them from but to take them on to something. It is a real picture of what God wants to do through the transforming process of his redemptive love and grace. You, our viewers are responsible.

Betty, we get a lot of things on our heart. People bring to us things that need to be done but we can do a little but when there is something great, the only way we can do it is for you the viewer to say, "I identify, I see the need, I see the possibility of changing it." And you're the ones that show us, really in so many instances, the way of God and the will of God relating to particular issues that need to be addressed because they can't be addressed unless the love of God is flowing through you. And we want to thank you for that.

Here's what I want to ask you to do. Help us in the Rescue Life effort. In countries all over the world we're establishing safe havens, we're building *LIFE* Centers for them, and we are literally giving them a way of escape and we're heading children off by educating people in impoverished areas how the predators work, and the false promises they make, and the damage that will come, and we are showing them a better way, an honest way. So all of this is the process.

Betty, the wonderful thing is, the average cost to rescue someone -- this is when you look at the overall picture, and right now we are trying to reach 6,000 that the missionaries have said, "This is what we can handle, this is what we can oversee, this is the need. Will you enable us?"

It takes \$128 per child, per woman, per person to get them out, to get them started in a new way, to provide for them at whatever basic need there is. You are the ones that make that possible. Would you simply today reach out?

I want to ask you to do this right now; reach out and touch someone with love. You say how? I want you to dial the number that's on the screen. You can go online LifeToday.org but I want you to touch someone with love by saying, "Here's what I want to do. I want to rescue someone. Here's my gift of \$128."

If you say, "James, I can't do that." Could you and would you give \$64? And pray, "Lord, help someone else to do this" and we've got another rescue, the amount necessary. Would you do that?

I'm grateful to say that God has blessed us with people who will say, "You know what? Whatever it takes, I'll go the second mile." Could you give \$1280 to rescue 10? There are many people who do that because God's enables them to do it. If you can, please do.

We have a wonderful inspirational teaching series to send you by Lisa Bevere where you will learn to See It the right way from God's point of view. It will bless you. We want to send you the teaching series by CD or DVD, or even a flash drive, and also the book that she wrote where you will understand how to see things from a better point of view. We say thank you and we want to bless you. But we're asking you to make that gift right now to help us rescue lives from the sexual trafficking that is trapping and destroying so many innocent and precious lives.

Thank you for making the call. Thank you for making the gift God put on your heart. Use your bankcard, write a check or go online. Thank you so much for doing it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Human trafficking -- it is impossible to believe but at this very moment innocent children, many very young, are being sold and forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable. And someone must save them.

With your help today, we can reach, rescue, and restore their hope for a better future. Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their destiny forever! With gifts of \$64 or \$32 we will combine your support with others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of this existence.

Today with your gift of any amount, we'll send you Lisa Bevere's powerful new series, *See It*, on audio CD, along with her companion book, *It's Not How You Look, It's What You See*. In this new series, Lisa equips you to see a new perspective for your life, one of great possibilities, not limited by the world but defined by God who sees your future and created you to be a unique blessing to those around you.

With your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child, you may request the book along with *See It* on CD and DVD or choose U.S.B. flash drive, which includes all of the messages in both audio and video.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 to help rescue ten 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: I want to remind you that we only have a few days left to reach the goals that we feel like God has set for us to reach to rescue as many as possible and you make that possible. We're gladly sending you the teaching series by Lisa Bevere. If you'd like to have Sammy Rodriguez's book, *The Lamb's Agenda*, I'm telling you, what a powerful message -- what a powerful book! I not only wish that every Christian would read it, I wish we would wake up and apply it. We need a spiritual awakening in our country.

We've got an election coming up. Prayerfully, prayerfully vote the Lamb's agenda, the Christian worldview and let's take a stand. When the righteous rule the people rejoice.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Sammy Rodriguez. Sammy, God bless you! I love you, man!

Sammy: Thank you! Love you!

James: We are brothers in Christ for his glory. Thank you all for watching. You're family! Thank you!