

10/14/14

Week 42: Rescue life

Christine Caine/Lisa Harper

Chris: Hey everyone! Welcome to *LIFE Today!* Thank you so much for joining us. Obviously, I'm not James or Betty. My name is Chris Caine from the land down under. I'll be your host. James and Betty are off changing the world as usual. I'm just part of the family, part of the extended family, your cousin from Australia.

And it is my privilege today to be hosting a show with one of my dear friends, Lisa Harper.

Why don't we welcome Lisa Harper!

[Cheers & Applause]

Thank you so much for coming.

Lisa: I'm so excited to be here.

Chris: How are you doing? You've got like such a southern accent.

Lisa: Well, I was thinking when you were talking, I thought, I suddenly have a craving for Outback Steakhouse.

[Laughter]

Chris: I need to tell you I think you Americans are the only ones that eat Outback Steakhouse.

Lisa: I know it is not really Australian, we think it is. But I love your accent. I feel like you could just read the phone book and I'd rededicate my life to Jesus.

[Laughing]

Chris: This is the Queen's English. We actually say ahw-some.

Lisa: You know I can't do it. I'm not even going to say.

Chris: It is very dignified. What is ah-some anyway? We won't ??? -- say it anymore. Lisa, you've had a lot going on in your life recently! Please share with us some of the exciting news that has happened to you.

Lisa: Well, the most exciting news is after -- it took two years, but I became a momma four months and 25 days ago. Who is counting?

[Applause]

I adopted a little girl who thinks you are her aunt.

Chris: Oh, she is my body double!

Lisa: Yeah, she is. And I'm convinced we look alike -- from Haiti. I had a domestic adoption that fell through. I didn't think I'd ever be a momma. I was so broken in my 20s and 30s that I just was really drawn to abusive men and carbohydrates.

[Laughter]

Chris: Not a good combination.

Lisa: Not a great combo. And God healed me of the abusive men. But anyway, I missed the window of having children biologically and I thought, I'm not going to get to be a mom. I know God is good and I trust his sovereignty and that was just a consequence of my own brokenness, kind of looking for love in all the wrong places. But then some friends just really confronted me and said there are 147 million orphans

and for so many of them they don't have a shot at a mom and a dad. So for between me and death, I'm the better option as a single mom.

So I started the process; lost a domestic adoption with a little girl, you know that story -- who was a precious kid. A prostitute had gotten pregnant and that adoption fell through a week before I was supposed to bring her home.

Right after that, I was actually in Dallas, and some friends called and said, "We just got back from Haiti. While we were there one of the moms in the feeding program died of AIDS." They didn't know she had AIDS until she died at the hospital. They said, "She has a two and a half year who is HIV positive who has tuberculosis and cholera." They said, "We just remembered you saying you wanted a child nobody else was standing in line for because every child deserves a mom and a dad."

I said, "Give me a kid that may not have that option."

They said, "We remembered you saying that. And Missy, if she goes into the normal system will die in two to three months, but if somebody from a first world country adopts her she has a shot."

So they said, "No pressure."

[Laughter]

"But would you pray about this?"

And I said, "No, I won't because I've already been praying about it for 30 years. So it's time to pull the trigger."

Six weeks later I was in Haiti, and two years later I brought her to Nashville where people talk correctly. So she is now Tennessean.

[Laughter]

Chris: You know this subject is very tender to my heart because I'm adopted too and it just makes me so excited that here you are saying, you know what? God is answering my prayer. When do you think God first put that seed in your heart to adopt a child?

Lisa: That's a great question. Years ago, my best friend and I, it was actually when we were in high school did a Bible study on adoption. And we're both loud and so people would come, I think just because we were loud and we had chocolate at Bible study.

[Laughter]

But we did a Bible study on the theme of adoption through scripture. I was 17-18, I still had tight skin and high metabolism and I really didn't know what I was talking about but we were sincere as you can be, and you live in the revelation God's given you at that moment. We were just really undone by this theme of adoption in scripture and how God has adopted us so both of us made this little pact at 17 that we're going to adopt.

And little did we know she would suffer with infertility and she went on to adopt two children; little did we know my husband would be lost and wouldn't stop to ask for directions and I would be old as dirt and no children.

But I think, God, to me, the story is so much bigger than adoption -- it is God as a redeemer. So whatever... whatever you think you've lost because you have broken chapters in your life, no chapter is so ruined that God can't redeem your story. So it's not just about getting to be a momma to me, it's about the fact that he is always good.

And I love that verse in Psalm 84, verse 11: No good thing does he withhold from him whose walk is upright. Or I always do my own little translation and say: Or from her who often stumbles. Even though I made so many mistakes in my 20s and 30s and was so desperate to be a momma, God never forgot his promises to me. He is such a redeemer. And so to me that is the real sweet exclamation point of getting to bring her home.

Chris: That is just beautiful! I hope that you caught that as you are watching this. God is such a redeemer that he wastes nothing and that he is truly able to work all things together for good and he will use all those broken pieces of your past. And if he gave you a promise -- the fact is, they don't have any expiring dates. I think that's really the bottom line is that God's promises don't have expiring dates. That's what you've shown us.

I sit here and look at your leather jacket and you're looking pretty hot. I'm making note of that because you ride a motorcycle, and here you are you've adopted a beautiful, beautiful little Missy. I mean she is sassy as they come.

Lisa: Just like her Aunt Chris.

Chris: And her Aunt Chris as opposes to her "ant."

[Laughter]

So you've adopted a beautiful little Haitian girl, HIV positive. So you're a bit of a risk taker; ride motorbikes, you have decided not to sit around and wait. Do you think that really is part of the Christian journey, taking risks?

Lisa: I do. I actually do. Part of the whole riding motorcycles was I grew up Baptist so I wanted an excuse to wear leather pants; it has nothing to do with Jesus.

But in Hebrews -- in Hebrews chapter 13, we've talked about this before, at the end the Hebrews where it says Jesus went outside the camp. The cross wasn't in the walled city of Jerusalem, it was outside Jerusalem, it's on that hill, Gehenna. Well, it's next to Gehenna; Golgotha is next to Gehenna. So he took our shame outside the city.

And then the author of Hebrews says something, this is a paraphrase, but basically it says: So you need to be willing to go outside of the city for the sake of Christ. I don't think passivity is an option for believers. I think once you really begin to believe Jesus,

not just believe in Jesus, but I mean believe Jesus, everything he said, everything he did, I don't think we can be complacent.

That doesn't mean everybody is called to adopt an HIV positive child but we are called to do something that is outside of our comfort zone for the sake of Christ. How the Israelites -- remember how, at the beginning of the wilderness they got to sit on the bank and just watch God perform the miracle when he parted the Red Sea.

But then 40 years later, because they had spent all that time with God, they were maturing with God, he said, "Okay, I'm going to part the Jordan. You're going to have a miracle. You're going to get to cross this water too but this time you have to participate in the miracle. You can't just observe."

So I think for anybody who knows Jesus, as you begin to mature in that relationship, yeah, I think there's some risk for all of us. I think that's what the book of Acts is about. I know you love Acts because you're a Greek.

Chris: I do. I think the whole Bible is actually... it starts off...

[Laughing]

Yes, but with just us living a risky Christian life, and I think when you settle for comfort and complacency, you actually stop living. Because Jesus said, "I came that you might have abundant life."

That means you take risks, you step out of your comfort zone, you go to where you need to go. I love the fact that you're still doing it. I feel like you and I are a little bit like Caleb; but we're not quite 85, we've got a ways to go.

Lisa: So little ways.

Chris: We've got a long way to go, everyone! I want you to know that.

[Laughter]

But Caleb did say at 85, he turned around to Joshua and he said, "I'm as young now as I was then. Now give me this promise." So the fact that there is still breath in my lungs means that God still has a plan, a purpose, and a destiny.

I always say to people, if you're still living, God still has got something for you to do and there's someone for you to help. We didn't come to earth to retire. Imagine just golfing my way into heaven. Whatever. It is like really? Really? We're here for such a short time and this is not a dress rehearsal for the real thing.

So I admire you because you didn't sit back and say, "Well, I'm so disappointed because I didn't get the husband that I wanted so I'm just going to sit here and do nothing." You've done what you can, where you are, with what you have.

I know there are so many people watching this and they're thinking, can I do anything? Well, I think there is always -- God puts something in front of us and says, "If you would just step up, take a risk, then there's promise on the other side of that." I want to know, because I've been at a few Women of Faith events with you and Missy, and that little girl has got energy plus. She is like an Eveready Battery; she is awesome. So how has your concept of God or has your concept of God enlarged at all having this little girl in your home?

Lisa: I've never been so exhausted in my whole life.

[Laughter]

Chris: Welcome to my world!

Lisa: But it is this glorious kind of exhaustion because -- and I know everybody says this. I didn't have the concept of it until God allowed me to be Missy's momma. When I look at her, some days -- last night I was giving her HIV meds, she said, "Thank you, momma."

I thought, oh, my goodness. I'm giving her HIV meds and she is sitting here swinging her feet and saying "thank you."

You know her, she is not an angel; she is feisty. She also told me last night because I'd been running. She goes, "Momma, you stanky!"

I don't mean to paint her as perfect, and she was accurate at that point. But I thought, I would do anything for this amazing five year old little girl that God has allowed me to parent. How much more? You know the parable where Jesus says, he loved -- he went to the neighbor and gave the neighbor bread when the neighbor knocked on his door. But how much more did he love the kids who were in his home? We have this heavenly father who how much more?

So yeah, the concept of God's affection. I put my hope in Jesus when I was a kid. When I was five years old I walked an aisle because the pastor had preached about how God is a father who does not walk away, and my father had walked away from us so I was pretty desperate for a dad who would stay. And so I've known God as my savior since I was a kid.

I didn't think he liked me very much. For so many years I thought he saved me because he felt sorry for me. So to begin to really get the delight of God, even now I think Missy helps me with that because I think she -- I think she hung the moon. And to know how much more God loves me, even on my worst days, God loves me infinitely more than I love this little girl. Yeah, that is expanding my view of who he is.

Chris: I just love that God used you to bless her but she is blessing you like every day. I know that you say that so often. Tell me when you went down to Haiti, really, I'm just thinking there were so many children. How did you know Missy was yours?

Lisa: Well, they had told me she would die if somebody didn't adopt her. Six weeks later I was on a plane going to Haiti. I've been to a lot of third-world countries; I've never been that hot. I told Jesus I would be a missionary in Africa if he would just give me a Slurpee. When I landed in Port-au-Prince it was just so hot. Then you took this

horrid diesel bus trip to this very, very primitive area where she was; it took about four hours from Port-au-Prince to get there.

But they put her in my arms. She was two and a half years old; she was 19 pounds, very malnourished, teeny. She was very, very sick and I'll never forget. She looked at me kind of with disdain. You shouldn't trust me at all. For a long time I was just Santa with bigger hips to her. But she put her little hand around my finger and she looked up at me and she went, "Ello, Momma."

And I was like, "Well, stick a fork in me, I am done." There you go.

I think again that takes me back to who God is. He says he directs the steps of our lives. His plans for us are to prosper us, to give us a hope, and a future. My hope and my future, God knew, as many times as I messed up in my 20s and 30s and 40s, God knew this little pumpkin's momma is going to die of AIDS and she is going to have nobody else, and you get to go to Haiti and be her momma.

I wasn't looking for Haiti. I had a baby here that I was adopting until five days before she was born and that fell apart. So I didn't even -- that wasn't even in my frame of reference. But God knew that. He is always sovereign, he is always good. And now, sometimes my friends tease me and they're like, if we didn't know the story we would believe you birthed this child because y'all are two peas in a pod.

[Laughter]

I just get so tickled at some of the things where I just go, only God could do that. Only God could do that. It really is -- it is not --

I don't mean to paint it with just a rosy hue, it is hard. I'm a single mom. I'm tired. Some of the HIV stuff can be hard and scary. But it is the sweetest -- it is the sweetest ride I've been on.

Chris: I'm just astounded. I follow you on Instagram and you post so many posts of her singing; that is astounding given some of the conditions she grew up in.

Lisa: She sings all the time. She didn't speak any English when I brought her here except for hello, good-bye.

She called me Pablo for the first month because someone had explained the story of Paul to her, and they called him "Pablo," said he was a missionary. And when they told her who her momma was, they said, "Your momma is kind of like a missionary. She goes around and talks to people about Jesus."

And in her little five-year-old mind it was, "Oh, my momma must be Pablo."

[Laughter]

So she called me Pablo for the first month, which I thought I'm sure Paul is in glory like, "You've got to be kidding me!"

[Laughter]

But it was really sweet. But I'll tell you what, to synopsise it, I was at a conference recently and there was an elderly woman on the front row, her name was Miss Ruth, she was 83 years old and she couldn't hear very well. Well, toward the end of the conference I had all the women who were -- I can't even remember exactly what the prayer was for but it was a small group; we got pretty close. So I had them stand for this time of real intentional prayer. And Miss Ruth was standing next to this other elderly woman on the front row and they kind of had to climb up each other to stand up.

And Miss Ruth said, "I don't know what all this is about but if it's about Jesus, I'm standing up!"

[Laughter]

I was like, well, there you go! That is how we're supposed to live. She wasn't even

sure what she was standing up for but she knew it was about Jesus so she was all in. I thought, that's who I want to be.

That's been -- everybody is not called to adoption, everybody is not called to the things God has called each person who is listening to individually, but in my story, he said, "I want you to go love on this child." And by doing this, and Chris, she's -- her HIV, because God had done so much, I thought I'm just going to pray audaciously. I'm not as audacious as you, and sometimes my faith is so -- I've learned a lot from you to just trust. God is where? I thought I've got her home, she's lived; I'm going to pray this audacious prayer and pray that her HIV is undetectable by Christmas. A month after I had her in Nashville, Vanderbilt called me and they said, "Lisa, we got her blood work back and her HIV is undetectable."

Chris: Come on!

[Cheers & Applause]

Lisa: So now I'm praying for a higher metabolism and a husband with hair and money.

[Laughter]

Chris: And we are all going to agree together.

[Laughing]

You know I'm Greek so we love hairy Greek men.

You know what a powerful story of hope, of redemption. This is so tender to me.

Lisa has adopted a girl and I'm adopted and I know everyone watching this, we would all love to be able to do something to help rescue, to help reach children, to help rescue them, to help restore their lives, and this is why I love to partner with *LIFE Outreach*

because we are serious about helping to reach, rescue, and restore the lives of young women and children that are caught in the horrors of sex trafficking.

In a moment we're going to give you an opportunity to be able to help us, I know this story has stirred you and you thought, we can't all go to Haiti and adopt Missy but we can all make a difference in the life of a child.

I want you to watch this. I want you to watch this video of just how broken dreams, how dreams are shattered and turned into nightmares and we're going to give you an opportunity to partner with us to turn those nightmares back into dreams.

Begin video clip

[Children playing]

Announcer: It began with a dream for a mother like this; it was the dream of a prosperous future for her daughter. Then hope for that dream came as a promise from a stranger. An honorable start to a new life. An opportunity for a child to escape a world of poverty and to pursue her destiny.

But in reality this dream-come-true was a mother's worst nightmare. Promise became betrayal. This daughter was kidnapped and sold into the sex slave trade. Once a picture of innocence, her body was violated as she was submitted to the unbridled lust of countless men.

With her humanity stripped from her, and her spirit broken, it seemed all hope was lost. It's not too late for daughters like this to be rescued. But time is running out.

End of clip

In the studio

Chris: Wow! As a mother, it breaks my heart watching that. I've got two girls of my

own and they could have been any one of those girls. What mother wouldn't want to do something? Who wouldn't want to do something?

What I'm grateful for and as a partner with *LIFE Outreach*, every single one of us can do something. For only \$128 we can literally reach, rescue, and restore the lives of these young women. We can help to turn that nightmare back into a dream.

Imagine how that mother felt, she gave that child up to a dream thinking that she was going to fulfill her potential and she was taken. And I've held those girls; I know what it feels like to look into their eyes and to see the hopelessness. You and I are the hands and feet of Jesus.

For only \$128 -- really? What is that? We can help to reach and rescue and restore their lives. We can see those nightmares turned back into dreams and they can fulfill their God-given destiny and their God-given potential. I've seen the difference that it can make.

I wonder if you could help maybe ten girls. For \$1280 we can help restore the lives of ten girls; ten human beings created in the image of God. What wouldn't I do if it was my own daughter? The thing is these girls have become just like my daughters. I love working with *LIFE Outreach* because we are there in the trenches, on the coal face, every cent of this money goes in to literally reach these girls in the darkest places, to help to rescue them out of the pit literally, and to restore every part of their lives spiritually, emotionally, physically.

And the other side of it is that the enemy doesn't win. These girls' nightmares are turned back into dreams and they fulfill the purpose and the destiny for which God has placed them on the earth. We can't do everything but we can all do something.

Would you do something? \$128 to rescue a life? Perhaps you could do it for 10 lives: \$1280? Why don't you pick up the phone now? Why don't you go online right now? Partner with us; help us to continue to reach and rescue and restore these lives. God bless you as you bless others.

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**Begin video clip**

Lisa: I've spent the last few days walking the streets of Mumbai. I have seen brothels. I have seen children. I have seen women. But they all have one thing in common, none of them chose to be here. The women I've talked to, they were either kidnapped from Nepal or other places in India, brought to Mumbai with the hope of something bigger, something better, a future, an opportunity to improve their lives. And what they found was torture, captivity, and bondage. It is an overwhelming hopeless cycle.

But you know what? We can do something about this. First it's preventative; we want to spread the word to the people that are lying and taking these young women captive, these women that all they want is a hope and a future. We want to educate and equip them so they don't fall captive to this.

But secondly, the ones that are captive, we want to rescue them. We want to give them enough hope that they will be brave enough to step out, and when they step out we want to give them a place where they can be restored. We want to restore their lives. We want to give them skills so that they can have a dream. We need partners for rescue.

But you know what? We need you to go to the phone. We need you to go online. We need you to be generous. I know what you've seen, I know what you've heard is uncomfortable but we need you to move into action. Thank you!

End of clip

In the studio

Chris: I know that you're going to want to join us to help reach, rescue and restore these children.

Lisa, I want to thank you.

Can we just thank Lisa Harper? Does it get any better? One of my favorite people! I love her dearly.

Thank you so much for watching *LIFE Today*. Thank you for joining us!