

12/16/14
Week 51: Fall Mission Feeding
Lacey Sturm

James: Oh, boy! Do you like rock music? Do you like hard rock? Soft rock? I tell everybody I like solid rock, unshakable rock, unshakable foundation. I'm James Robison; my wife Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

We have got Lacey Sturm and she is a rock princess; that's what it says right there on the cover. It says "The revelation of a rock princess" and the forward is by Head, lead singer Brian Welch -- Brian Head Welch.

What was his group? What was the name of his group that he sang in? Korn -- spelled with a K, Korn. Now he was so covered with tattoos that you could hardly see that there was a person under the tattoos and his hair was just different and he got so gloriously converted.

Well, Lacey was a gifted little gal. I don't think she knew it. She was pretty bummed out on religion -- God is too -- most folks are, and she was pretty much in a state of hopelessness and didn't want to live. I want you to hear Lacey's story from her.

Would you welcome Lacey to *LIFE Today*?

Glad to have you here.

[Cheers & Applause]

Lacey: Good to be here.

James: I want you to tell us about your childhood and the point you reached in your life where something very, very important took place.

Lacey: I grew up in Arlington, here, with my mother. My mother was a single mom and we had it pretty hard. She had to work and try to make ends meet and that was difficult a lot of the times. Sometimes we had food stamps and she would have to give that to the babysitter so God always fed us. She made sure that I acknowledge that

because he did. So I had a faith in God even as a child and watched him do miracles in our family.

James: How many children in the family?

Lacey: There are six in our family.

James: Where did you fit into that progression?

Lacey: I was second.

James: So you had to be taking care of some of those a lot of times too; didn't you?

Lacey: We all had to help out. So I talk about them in the book and how much I loved them. But the thing is that even though my mother always spoke to me about God, because of those hard times and the stress that that puts on a family anyway, of course, there was arguing and resentment and stuff like that.

But when I was 10 years old, my cousin who was three was beaten to death by his stepfather. My cousin was very close to our family. They lived with us for a little while and we were in the same apartment complex here in Arlington, actually. But when he died my mother, she is just such a strong woman and I had never seen my mother cry until then.

I remember thinking, there must not be a God or if he is he must be scary and evil and hateful and so I'm just going to believe there's not one. When I made that decision also, what came with it was this wave of sadness that just -- it was like a loyalty to my cousin. Like I'm going to stay sad for him. Like why am I alive and he's not -- and cry myself to sleep at night.

Whenever I was 13, I think I thought of suicide the first time in a really dangerous way. Even then it was my brothers and sisters that I thought, I can't leave them. I need to be here for them. Things are hard enough and so I didn't; I let that be my reason.

The problem is if we let people be our reason for living, people change and circumstances change and we don't always have that reason and so I talk about that too.

James: And that really is the title of her book; I think it is important to note that, *The Reason*. And the subheading: How I discovered a life worth living. She was not seeing

any reason. You really despaired of life as you knew it. You reached the place you actually didn't want to live anymore period. You reached a place of finality in your thinking, didn't you?

Lacey: Yes. I hated the idea of religion and Christianity because I felt like it was dangerous to think there is a God who is going to keep us safe when bad things happen. So I hated that.

If somebody would tell me something is a sin, I would say, "Well, I'm going to do that because you're not going to control me." Because I thought that's what it was for; you tell somebody it's a sin so you can control them. So I would go do that. But the thing is that sin, the Bible, the truth says, the Bible says sin leads to death. And we don't recognize that sin is addressing the death of our souls, it causes that.

So by the time I was 16, I was worn out and tired in my own sin, in my own -- the way that I had been slowly killing myself from the inside anyway. So I remember that day; there was a bunch of different things that had happened. My grandfather had had a heart attack earlier that week and I'd been kicked out of my house, was living with my grandparents and when my grandfather had the heart attack, of course, I took it all on myself and said, "Oh, this is my fault."

And my grandmother had even gotten in an argument with me about it. She was saying, "If you stop getting in trouble at school, you need to listen to what we're telling you. You're not obeying us. You're making things harder." What my grandmother was really trying to tell me was stop being so selfish. Your actions affect the people around you, and what you're doing is not just affecting you, it is affecting our whole house so you need to stop being selfish.

And what I took from it and twisted it was I said, "Oh, he would be better without you," which was a lie because if he was stressed out because of what I was doing. It was because he loved me. He wouldn't have cared if he didn't love me. So the truth is, I twisted that in my own thinking and made it seem like a noble reason for me to die, for me to kill myself.

James: So that's what you planned. What happened?

Lacey: So that next day I came home from school early and I was supposed to -- my grandmother was supposed to be at the hospital, which she wasn't. She happened to be home at the time and already interrupting my process. She noticed that something

was wrong with me and began to say, "What's wrong with you?" I wouldn't talk to her.

She said, "You know what? You're going to go to church tonight." It was almost like a punishment for me not wanting to talk to her because she knew I didn't want to go to church. So she said, "You are going to church. And you know why? Because you're in my house and you're going to do what I say." She just knew how to fight with you until she could get her way.

James: I've known some grandmothers like that.

[Laughter]

Lacey: It was really important for me, obviously, that day, I would not have made it through if she had not fought for that moment because I ended up going to church, sitting in the back, hating everybody in the room.

And the man began to preach, the preacher, and he began to tell my life's story like I was the only one in the room. When he got to the end of his sermon he began to cry and say, "There is a suicidal spirit in the room."

And I remember thinking, this is weird.

And then he said, "Please come up here and let us pray for you because God has a plan for your life and he doesn't want you to die tonight."

And I say that in the front of the book because I know somebody else needs to hear that too. God has a plan for your life and he doesn't want you to die tonight.

He said, "Please come up and let us pray for you." I was like there is no way I'm going up there and letting them pray for me. But I knew that he was talking to me but I was trying to rationalize it in my head, and I couldn't think of anything so I was just like you've got to get out of here. This is weird.

So I went to the back of the church and there was a man named Brother Richard, Dick Partridge. We call him Poppy now; he is still in our life. He still writes us and we talk. But he was standing there. I didn't know him. He was a white headed man that I probably would have judged because I had a harsh attitude towards men because I had seen them hurt my family and hurt people that I loved. I think about that with tears now because I know so many men love God and love people with a genuine

heart but they get judged so harshly because people have never seen a man love that way. My grandfather was a good man too. He is a good man. But when he looked at me, this man, he was a stranger to me, and he looked at me with purity in his eyes like I'd never seen from a strange man, with love like I'd never seen.

I thought, why are you looking at me like you know me? And why are you looking at me like that? And I was frozen.

He said, "I feel like the Lord wants me to speak to you and tell you that even though you've never known an earthly father, that God will be a better father than any earthly father could ever be."

When he said that I thought, I don't need a dad. I don't care. How do you even know that? But I don't care anyway.

Then he said, "And God has seen you when you cry yourself to sleep at night." That was the most shocking thing because I had done that every night since I was 10, unless I'd passed out somewhere doing something stupid. So that was the most lonely part of my day, and for him to say that God saw me there and to know that moment, and to know that that was like the roots of all my pain was in those moments, and this is why I didn't want to wake up anymore.

And for him to say, "God has seen you in those times. And Jesus died on the cross to take the pain out of your heart that you've rehearsed since you were little." And he said, "The pain in your heart that's come from your own sins and from the sins of other people against you, Jesus died on a cross to take that pain. He died for the sins of the world."

James: Well, you sing with a group and did for so many years as lead singer for Flyleaf, and I know they have one song that I saw that had already 12 million people had viewed it on YouTube. You were just talking about the cross and about love and one of the songs that you sing, that I know people love and I know you love to sing it, I believe it is called "Mercy Tree." Would you sing that for us?

Would you like to hear Lacey thing this "Mercy Tree"?

And your husband -- her husband Josh, they are now a team. There is the web site where you could communicate with them if there is any way that you want to see if they could possibly come your way for some kind of an event or to your church or some kind of an outreach. There is the web site. But Josh is a musician and he is going

to come and accompany her. So would you welcome Josh and Lacey? They're going to do "Mercy Tree."

[Lacey sings]

On a hill called Calvary
Stands an endless mercy tree
Every broken, weary soul
Finds your rest and be made whole
Stripes of blood that stain its frame
Shed to wash away our shame
From the scars pure love released

Our savior chose the mercy tree

In the sky between two thieves
Hung the blameless Prince of Peace
Bruised and battered, scarred and scorned
The sacred head pierced by our thorns

"It is finished" was his cry
The perfect lamb was crucified
His sacrifice a victory
Our savior chose the mercy tree

Hope went dark that violent day
The whole earth quaked at love's display
Three days silence in the ground
This body born for heaven's crown

On that bright and glorious day
When heaven opened up the grave
He's alive and risen indeed
Praise him for the mercy tree

And death had died
Love has won
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Jesus Christ is overcome
He is risen from the dead

One day soon we'll see his face
And every tear he'll wipe away
No more pain or suffering
Oh, praise him for the mercy tree

Death has died
Love has won
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Jesus Christ has overcome
He is risen from the dead

Death has died
Love has won
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Jesus Christ has overcome
He is risen from the dead

On a hill called Calvary
Stands an endless mercy tree

[Cheers & Applause]

James: We love you! What a voice! Wow! I want to send you *The Reason*: How we can all discover him -- life with him.

I didn't have a father either, and we live in a fatherless world. Boy, I know the perfect father. I'm telling you, he wants to be your father. He's God of all creation, the rock of ages, the shelter from the storm.

I'd love to send you the book. You can get it in the bookstores, online. You want somebody to pray with you? The number's there on the screen. We love to pray with you and let you know there really is a way to find the life worth living, it is the source of life, Christ -- the way, the truth, and the life. I'm not high on religion, I'm high on a relationship with a living God. Religion is a very inadequate substitute for the mighty redemptive power of God.

Lacey, thank you.

Would you say thanks to Lacey again?

[Cheers & Applause]

Lacey, I want to show our viewers and I'll show you something that will touch your heart. As a matter of fact, you wouldn't be able to bear to look sometimes if you didn't know we can change it all. I believe we can change it.

A lot of times you see things I wish we could do something about. Here's something we know that don't even hope for, we know that in love we can do something. I want you to watch very prayerfully. I'm telling you, you really are the answer right here. Watch.

On the mission field

[subtitles]

>> My boy is very sick with coughing and fever. I feel very sad that he is sick. I know that it is because of the lack of food. That he is sick like this.

Tammy: I'm sitting here with Adalina. You can see the sadness in her eyes as she is holding Manuel and it sounds like he is fighting for life; which truthfully, I know that his life body is. It is all the symptoms of malnutrition. She has already lost a child. She is doing everything she can. There is just not enough food. There is nothing more that she can do.

Sitting here it makes me incredibly sad because I know there is an easy solution to change things for this family and for this little boy and to bring him health, to keep him from dying. This need is urgent. His life is important and valuable. He is not promised tomorrow but he has today. We have to do something now to make a difference in the lives of this family and hundreds of thousands like him.

End of clip

In the studio

James: That situation is grave. It is very, very serious. It's easy to turn away because it's very difficult to look. But if you could only understand that where there is love, there is hope -- where there is hope there is life.

Betty, during this last week, for our friends to help us, I'm believing that we're going to have the greatest response perhaps ever, and especially knowing that a group of friends said, "We'll match what's given" with a very large grant -- the largest we've ever received in this critical time. I'm believing everyone is going to do something.

Betty: I do too. What can you do? It is, as Tammy said, it is an easy solution but it is a mountain if we don't really become active in that solution. These mothers love their babies so much just as we love our own, but they're losing them over simply not having enough food. I hope you will join us. Feel the heart of that mother and the sadness that she feels. She's going to possibly lose a second child. Please join with us and let's get the food to them because it will save a lot of lives.

James: I believe that in our nation... Betty and I, of course live in the United States, in America. We believe it's been a very blessed nation. And oftentimes our leaders say, "God bless America." Many songs imply the desire God bless America.

You know what I've been praying for the last several years? God help America to bless you. Help our nation and all the nations where people have comprehension and understanding and opportunity, help them to bless you.

Let me tell you the best way to bless God. Bless someone he loves. Bless someone in need -- meet a need. Here's what we're asking you to do. This is the last week and we have a miracle matching gift. It really is -- it is a miracle! Only God could have put it on the hearts of a group of people, no one of them in themselves had incredible wealth, they just said, "We so believe in the importance of this program and we so want to share the love of God with those families, we will match up to one and a half million dollars of what's given."

So would you right now reach out and literally be an answer to someone's desperate prayer and need? Would you dial the number? Would you go get your bankcard and use it like a check? Would you just do that? That's really how you should always use those cards, like a check. If you want to go online, LifeToday.org and make the gift God puts on your heart, knowing it's going to be doubled.

Let me explain to you. We're going to send some gifts to you to bless you because we love to bless. We want to inspire you, want to encourage you. We're going to send you those gifts to say thank you but you're going to be given the greatest gift, you're going to be giving people a chance at life.

So would you dial that number? And if you can make a gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 you will help us feed three, five, or ten children for the next months. If you give \$1,000, we'll be able to help 100. But now think about it, it will now become \$200. If you give \$100 it will not be 10 but 20 -- \$50 will not be 5 but 10 -- \$30 will be doubled to 6. So everything you do is going to be doubled.

Father, I pray you'll help every person -- every person who can help to reach out and help right now; in Jesus' name I pray.

Thank you for making that call.

By the way, if you get a busy, you be determined and you get through as though a life depends upon your help because in fact it does. Thank you so much for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished areas of Africa, families are suffering, facing death by starvation, and those hit the children are their children. Life's mission feeding program is there, able to feed and care for over 400,000 children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With all of our previous reserves gone, and Angola facing its worst drought and food shortage in 20 years, we need to immediately replenish our funding and supplies for our feeding programs.

As an answer to prayer, a group of *LIFE's* friends have set a \$1.5 million matching gift challenge for Mission Feeding. This means your gift today can have a double impact! \$30 to help feed three children will be doubled to impact six children. \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save 10 children. \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed 20 children. And \$300 for 30 children will be doubled to help feed and minister to 60 children!

With your gift of any amount we'll send you *All Things New*, a daily devotional with an inspirational music CD. With your double impact gift of \$100 or more, please request the N.I.V. larger print reference Bible.

Finally, please consider a double impact gift of \$1,000 and request our commemorative glass sculpture, "The Blessing."

This is the last week! Please call, write, or go online today and make your gift of life to help feed and care for hungry children.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I do want to remind you, and I know my heart is heavy because I care. I'm asking you from the depth of my heart if you can help at all, whatever you're doing at any level will be doubled because of love. I want us to give these little children... I don't look at them and shake it off. They're all precious to the Lord and I think they are to you. Now let's help them. Let's feed them. Let's give them a chance.

We'll send you the Bible, the gifts we've mentioned, but if you'd like to have Lacey's testimony, and many of you can go on YouTube and listen to some of the songs that they did with the incredible Flyleaf, which was really a platinum-selling, international rock band but gives God glory though but it is just amazing. But boy, this girl, I mean there is her e-mail address.

You say, "I want some way for her to come minister in our area." But get her book. We'll send it to you. You just help us help these kids and ask for the book, we'll gladly send it to you.

Say thanks to Lacey again. Lacey, you really blessed us. We love you! Love you! Listen to me now. Thank you for your help. Last week! Pray everybody who can help will. Thank all of you. God bless you.

James: I want you to remember the importance of year-end gifts; important for you but also for the mission outreach God has placed before us. We pray we'll hear from you.