

1/26/15

Week 5

Steve and Becky Riggle

James: Thank you very much. Thank you for giving us this opportunity. I'm James Robison; my wife Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

Years ago, I literally sat in a chair at Channel 8, WFAA, ABC, and read from Romans one and said that if we turn away from God and change the truth of God into a lie then we're given over to appetites that control us to the point that we actually move into that which is against the natural. The Bible specifically said: Men having sex with men, women with women. And then it continues: Until you are actually thinking with a depraved mind, incapable of rational, reasonable thinking. And you'll reach a place that you not only are trapped by those out-of-control appetites, by putting God out, not glorifying him as God, worshipping something he made rather than him, but you not only are trapped, you then also -- the very last verses in that chapter -- give hearty approval to those who do those thing. Welcome to America in the 21st century.

I was kicked off television after I read that. Kicked off! And told I would not go back on. But the city of Dallas stood up, and Christians all over America stood up and we overthrew the fairness doctrine that was a lousy federal doctrine, a law, and won. And we saw an awakening as a result of the prayer that followed -- and this is no exaggeration -- and even ended in seeing the Soviet threat halted.

You say, "How did that happen to do with prayer?" It had everything to do with it. This is happening in Houston right now. Pastors have stood up against a law that basically says a man that says "I'm a woman" or "feel like one" can walk in women's restrooms, cannot be stopped; total open license to that which is against nature. And the mayor has blatantly spoken out in behalf of it.

Some pastors said, "No," and they asked for the right to vote and to change that ruling; and they didn't even get the right to vote even though they presented the petition to

do it. Pastor Steve Riggle and his wife Becky have been champions, along with so many others, and I mean it has been a miracle. We believe we have reversed it.

But here's what I believe. We've got to wake up America. Steve Riggle and his wife are here and he has escaped being held hostage and could have been killed, because of the power of prayer, and he's seeing the power of prayer right now, I believe, to wake up the church.

Would you welcome the pastor of Grace Community Fellowship in Houston, great church, in the Woodlands and in Houston, the southern part, would you welcome him and his wife, Becky -- Steve Riggle and Becky to *LIFE Today*?"

Glad to have you, Steve!

Becky, glad to have you.

I have seen the Lord speaking through you. I want to say, "Praise God!" Both of you, we are very much involved in mission outreach. We support missionaries. Betty and I have been held captive. We thought we were going to be killed; the missionary with us told us, "This is it." Every time before when we were held they told us we'd be all right. This time they thought we wouldn't be.

Betty: We kept waiting to hear that, "It will be all right."

James: We heard everything but the "all right." But God miraculously delivered us. But now you were taken captive and a miracle led to your release. Because our viewers love missions and mission work, I think it is important for them to know, our lead missionary just told us 15 missionary relief workers have just been killed in one area where we were. None of ours, and I can't help but believe it is the power of prayer that is protecting them, but the thing about it is that it is dangerous. Tell us what happened to you.

Steve: Well, in our late 20s, our first overseas trip to do short term missions work we were in a prison in the Philippine islands. And after holding four services there we

went to leave one portion and four prisoners jumped us, along with a friend of ours, and took us hostage; put knives to our throats and ultimately, ended up with us being placed in a van. When they let the van out of the prison the prison guards had blocked the road; ended up in a shootout and prisoners trying to kill us. One of them stabbed me right here in my shoulder; stabbed me right by my heart. Another one stabbed me five times in the back. Becky had been stabbed up and down her arms to keep the guards at bay; and four inches of a femur bone in her leg was blown out by a ricochet bullet. Sounded like World War II; the bullets were going everywhere. The prisoners are screaming and dying. It was a hopeless situation really.

James: I noticed when we were walking in here you have a little limp. Betty had some knee surgery on torn cartilage and I've watched her limp a little and I was wondering is that why the limp?

Becky: That's why; yeah.

James: What did you think when all this was going on? We actually, this one time in particular, even though we had been pressed before, and been in the shootouts, we didn't know -- we thought it was all over. Did you?

Becky: We thought -- yeah! I looked at the situation in the natural and I said, "There is no way. There is no way out." I was in the very back of the van with the prisoner with a rope around my neck tied to his waist. There was no way I was going to -- I couldn't even get out. I couldn't get through.

James: And you saw what they were doing to him.

Becky: Everything just happened so fast.

James: Because we're going to move to a current story of equal significance and we're going to need the same kind of miracles. We tell our viewers to pray for the missionaries. We've seen miracles for them to escape. Betty and I have felt like God has given us several miracles. I could name a bunch of them! And we believe in the power

of prayer. How important is it for viewers to be praying for missionaries? And what happened to you guys that you believe is a result of prayer?

Becky: Do you want me to tell the story?

Steve: Sure!

Becky: Well, when we got home -- you know sometimes when you're walking through things you don't always see the hand of God. It is when you look back that you see that God was with you the entire time, even though we felt his presence. But we found out that there was a group of just four or five people that just generally met together weekly in a prayer meeting and as they were praying --

James: In California?

Becky: Yes, in Redwood City, California; they were in a church Sunday school room and they were just praying as they normally did. And someone said, "I see a white van." The Lord started revealing the situation. "I see a white van."

And another one said, "I think there are missionaries in there and their lives are in danger and we need to pray for them right now."

So they began to intercede for people that they had no idea what the situation was; they began to intercede just on that information. When we got home and found out about it, we discovered that the timeline, as they were praying, we were actually in the van being stabbed and shot and our lives were definitely in danger, and they were interceding for us at that moment. I really attribute that we are alive today simply because some people began to be obedient and pray when God started revealing things to them.

James: Now here you are in America, and as a preacher you're being subpoenaed: Turn in your sermons, turn in your notes, turn in things you've said; not only transcripts but any video and audio. Now you might have said as though you were a common criminal in the United States of America; have you felt in some ways like

there's a greater imprisonment that they're attempting to enforce on you than even what you felt in that moment?

Steve: Well, it is pretty hard to believe that this is the United States of America. And incidentally, the subpoena even requested anything that I had ever said about Mayor Parker, any speech I had ever said, anything about her. And when those subpoenas came to the five of us, five pastors, all of us collectively said, "We will not -- we'll be glad to give the mayor --." I've been in Houston 31 years, "I'll give the mayor 31 years worth of sermons if she and the city attorney will agree that they will read them and listen to them." So that's not the point. The point is that the state... We are not going to agree to the state demanding those like we have to turn them over.

James: Yeah, and really trying to silence you. Telling you what you must not say when the first amendment says not only freedom of religion but freedom of speech. And that you can also post the transcripts and you have the press, you have the right to print them and share them. So this is an attack on freedom.

What you need to understand is in America right now and this is the enemy's ploy, he is attacking freedom. Jesus came to set captives free. He said, "If you know the truth and you walk in that truth, the truth will make you free." You abide in him, he is God, you live in freedom. He says, "Whom the son sets free, you are free indeed." So the enemy of life and truth is attacking freedom that comes through the truth and the person Christ, and through what he says, living in it. Our founders understood that and they knew the imperative to protect us.

Now then there is an assault not just on preachers but on everything pertaining to life and godliness. There is an inverted worldview where God is on the bottom, if he is even acknowledged at all, and other things have been exalted above God including sexual appetites and any other appetite we want to put before God. And when we do that, then we become controlled by those appetites, we don't think straight; that's Romans one which I referenced a moment ago.

You've seen this play out where we buckle the Bible belt. This is where Betty and I both found Christ. This is where we found one another, fell in love; it is where we

were married. It was where I was called to preach; it was where I preached my first city-wide crusade. And it's there, in the very center of where we say we believe the Bible that this assault has come.

This is what I'm praying for. It is a loud wake-up call to the whole church that if we don't come out from under cover and become the light set on a hill and stand together freedom as we've known it is coming to a screeching halt. Do you agree?

Steve: It absolutely is coming to a screaming halt because the large issue here is that a mayor and a city attorney have taken away the voting rights of the fourth largest city in the country.

James: Its four million people!

Steve: That ought to be a big deal to everybody in this country. And that's why we spoke out, and that's why we stood up. And that's why we went by the process to put this on the ballot and said, "Let the people speak."

One of the five pastors, he was an original "boat person" from Vietnam. He said, "In Vietnam," he said, "The reason we left..." because in Vietnam, when the communists came in the first thing they did was silence the press and the pulpit in Vietnam and that's what's happening here.

James: He's a great man. It was interesting that all these subpoenaed were ethnic minorities. Two of them would have been Hispanic or Latino, one of them a woman and boy, what a communicator she is! What's her name?

Steve: Magda Hermida.

James: And she is awesome! Madga, God bless you, sweetheart! God is all over you. Sammy Rodriguez said to me to tell you hello! Said you are all one. And there was another Hispanic, I think from Central America.

Steve: Hernan Castano.

James: And then there's a black, and he said he was part of the whole problem. But he said, "She didn't even put my name on the subpoena. I feel totally overlooked!" But here's the thing.

Betty: This is something that doesn't just affect your area. If we don't stand up as Christians, it is going to affect all of us because it is attacking our faith and our freedom.

Steve: Here's what was amazing. We reacted and it made the press in Houston and we're down there slugging away trying to fight the mayor and then people began to pick up on it. Governor Huckabee picked up on it, James, you guys picked up on it and other --

James: Sean Hannity is a Catholic, he picked up on it.

Steve: He picked up on it. And boy, this thing just hit a nerve. And when that happened, it caused such pressure at City Hall that the mayor had to take the subpoenas away.

James: You know one of the senior and most respected pastors, I think in the world, Pastor Ed Young, at Second Baptist, which is one of the largest churches in the world, he was like a statesman when he spoke. He basically said, "Hear this from Texas, don't mess with our pulpits!" And he wasn't talking about just Texas pulpits but all pulpits. And he said it as a classic statesman.

I want to say to you, and I say this with no exaggeration, the glory, the presence, the peace of God has rested all over you, Steve. Every time they have, so to speak, put the gun in your face with that camera trying to catch you with an unChrist-like attitude, you have maintained the most Christ-honoring demeanor, and I praise God for it.

Haven't you been amazed, Becky, at how God has given him the grace in the fury of the enemy attack on freedom? How he has been a statesman and diplomat, and

ambassador!

Becky: I'm proud of him! God has really been faithful to us.

James: I believe you all have been a gift from God. First of all by what was handed to you and your very biblical, very spiritual, in my opinion, Christian response. I think that you are an instrument to wake up America. Do you agree the church needs to wake up and really become a shining city set on a hill that not only can't be hidden but refuses to be hidden? I hear that charge. What would you say to the pastors and the churches?

Steve: I would say to pastors that we may not have another opportunity than this day -- this is our day. If we don't stand up in this day then I think we have abandoned our stewardship that God's given us of this hour. But if we will, it isn't just in our power, God is ready, he wants to once again awaken this great land. We know that. That's his heart.

So I would just ask pastors to really cooperate with what God is up to and stand regardless. There is a call on us; it is the call of the kingdom of God that's higher than any call of this world. And first we need to make sure we give allegiance to that call, and if we will, then in this world, I think that call will prevail in this hour.

James: I agree. And don't let little theological differences keep us from being the family of faith that really worships the father and loves our neighbor.

Betty, you have such deep feelings about what's going on. Your response to what you're watching right now because I listen to you pray so much. And you will call me sometimes weeping when you're at home reading your Bible and the concern you have for the country; what do you hear God saying with what you're watching? You got to see the response in Houston that was so encouraging.

Betty: I believe we do need to start first individually on our knees before God. We need to stay there. But in our hearts, let him fill us with the direction he wants to lead

us in. First of all, we have to allow him to search our own hearts and prepare us, get us ready for what he wants to do. We have to be prepared. He says put on his full armor. He prepares. In his Word is everything that we need, every tool, everything that we need to be victorious and to stand firm as Christians; and to represent the Lord as we should. It's all got to be done in his love. It's got to be something different than the world has ever seen -- and that's God's love.

I think, as Christians, we have a responsibility not to hide behind the bush, not to hide our lights but to stand up and to be firm and courageous, and yet peaceful because it is God's peace and love that's going to lead us through this.

James: Do y'all agree with that?

[Applause]

Thank you, honey!

I feel like God has made it clear in his Word that he will give us all things pertaining to life and godliness. That is the work of his Word and the power of his spirit in us, and the word alive in us.

And I say to you, Pastor Steve, I have seen all things pertaining to that life and godliness in you. I've seen Christ-likeness. I've watched you up close, I've watched you under the gun, I've talked to you. I've been there to preach to your church and to the incredible Hispanic service. I love you!

I agree with Sammy Rodriguez. You Hispanic and Latinos, you may be the ones that usher in the great awakening that we desperately need. You are so special. And the love that you have for all these people, it is just wonderful. So I thank God he delivered you from the van. Thank you, California Christians, for not only hearing the Lord but really praying. And thank you for being an example and inspiration. I'm joining with you and you know that. We are right on board with you to see God lift you up and exalt his name and see this nation return to him and have the greatest awakening in history.

Don't you long to see the greatest awakening? Our nation is a result of an awakening. God knows we need an awakening right now to heal the land, and it begins with God's people, called by his name, who humble themselves and pray. They seek his face, his pleasure, please him, not just his hand but turn from our wicked ways, and that includes indifference, slothfulness, lack of compassion, lack of courage -- all that he offers in Christ.

Father, heal our land beginning with each one of us; in Jesus' name.

We started talking to you about the journey as a missionary. You're going to have your heart touched when you look right now and you see what love can do and you see the tremendous need for it. I want you to watch this. I think your heart's going to leap when you realize we can be the answer to the need we see and it will be a joy. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: Louesette's story is not all that uncommon in Madagascar. She lives with her two children in a tiny shack in this poverty-stricken village. Louesette and her family don't have the means or access to clean drinking water so she walks each day to a contaminated river. But the burden of collecting this dirty water is no match to the burden of sorrow and grief that pierces her heart every time she goes to the river.

Open captions:

>> Two of my children have died because of this water and others are sick all of the time. For about a month after my baby died I couldn't come here. I was too sad. But I had no choice. I still had to come to this water even though it killed my two children.

Announcer: Even though the pain of Louesette's loss is reawakened with each scoop of deadly water, she longs for the day of never having to return to this river for her drinking water.

Open captions:

>> Our whole village dreams of getting a clean water source. I wouldn't have to worry about my children's health and I would be in peace for the first time.

End of clip**In the studio**

James: Dear Jesus, I want you to give her peace. Let us be an answer to her hope, her dreams, her prayer, her need; in Jesus' name.

I have been saying to those of you who watch us, if you watch many times you'll hear me say if you want your prayers answered, your prayers, seek to be an answer to someone else's prayers. Well, we can be.

We can be an answer, Betty, to her hope and her prayers. We can drill a water well in her area; in all the little village area around, we can drill them a well. We have targeted 500 areas for this year.

Now think about what I'm saying. Because of someone like you doing what you can to give a cup of water or a part of a well, you've drilled 4,000 wells to change everything for the people in those areas. We're asking you to help us touch another 12 countries, 500 areas and drill wells. Could you drill one? The average cost remains -- I don't know how long it will stay this but it remains \$4800. That's the average. Some wells we have to go deeper, it's a little more expensive. Some will be a little shallower, it's a little less but the average is \$4800.

If you can drill a well I know you'll want to -- if you can give a portion of a well. We ask our friends to pray about giving \$1200 and pray three join you or \$2400 and pray one joins you and we've got a well.

Betty, most of our viewers will give \$48 and that gives ten people water basically for the rest of their life. How would you like to make a \$48 gift that gave ten people clean water, for ten mothers like that? You can. \$144 triples it; that's 30 people water for the rest of their life.

Now we're going to send you some gifts to bless you. We're going to send you cups that people have asked for. These are wonderful coffee cups. They are so comfortable and so nice, it's the only thing Betty and I use. We actually, if we go out of town we'll take a couple of them with us; they're just that nice.

People have said, "Can we get some more? We have friends over now and we'll tell them where we got them." Yes, you can. All we're asking you to do is make a gift to help us drill those wells. We're asking you to make a gift of over \$100. We're going to send Betty's devotional book, her life story, which I thank God I'm included in, 51 years we've been married and we went together several years before that, *Free to be Me*. It will be a blessing. We're sending this to just say thank you for whatever gift you make.

If you can give a well or a large gift toward the well, we're sending you the beautiful, beautiful painting by Thomas Kinkade; it is hanging here in our studio. It's a canvas and it is beautiful. It is "The Forest Chapel," and I'm telling you, it's inspirational.

If you will simply go right now, please get your bankcard, go to the phone, dial the number and make the gift God put on your heart. Use that card like it's a check. You can go online LifeToday.org and make the gift. Whatever God leads you to do, please make that gift today. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for doing it. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us what you're sending in. Thank you for being an answer to a mother's prayer and a miracle for her family.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day millions of children 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 exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today we can establish and drill 500 water wells for remote villages in over 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 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 you'll receive the brand-new *Free to Be Me* 40-day devotional where Betty shares the challenges, victories, and insights God gave her while struggling through fear and insecurity. You'll also receive Betty's book, *Free to Be Me*. With your gift of \$100 or more you may request *LIFE's* inspirational coffee mug set featuring encouraging quotes and scripture to brighten your mornings for years to come!

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4,800 to help sponsor a complete well. And request this beautifully framed canvas print of "The Forest Chapel" by the Painter of Light TM, Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your 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: Well, I hope you'll give us an opportunity to send you what Betty has shared. It was an outpouring of her love to tell you about the journey that she's experienced. Let Betty be a blessing to you with what she has shared in her journey.

I want to say thanks to Becky and Steve Riggle. I believe you're a champion for God.

Would you join me saying thank God for Steve Riggle and Becky? You all are such a blessing. It's an honor to have you here. Thank you so much for being here. Thank all of you.

And by the way, all over the world, Down Under, U.K., Canada, South America, thanks for praying for us! We need it! Thank you for praying for us.