

2/17/15
Week 8
Chonda Pierce

James: Thank you so much! What a joy to be with you here. We welcome you to *LIFE Today*; I'm James Robison.

Chonda Pierce is with us. You get ready to smile and laugh. And then you're going to find out, how does a person walk through indescribable experiences that are unbearable? Well, she is going to talk about some that I know you'll identify with. But I think you'd like to smile in a day when there seems to be so little to smile about. I think you'll find that this incredibly gifted person has a whole lot to help you smile.

Would you welcome Chonda Pierce to *LIFE Today*?

Chonda: You all are so precious! I was back there pulling on the spanx which is very hard to do in a hurry, and let me just say this. They have wired me up, not with caffeine, but I've got this microphone here and this microphone here so they don't miss anything. Now do you think this voice is not going to carry far enough that we might miss something? It's so funny! So then I had to go... well, when you get nervous sometimes you get a little bit of a flow going.

[Laughter]

At my age, you can't walk and laugh at the same time. So I decided I better make a pit stop real quick before it started. And then I hear him telling my name and I'm trying to pull my spanx up and get that microphone back where it is supposed to be. Right now, I can't sit down; I've got some microphone pack something. I could get electrocuted at any moment.

[Laughter]

I just love this fancy TV stuff. Look, the men are going, this is really gross!

[Laughter]

Yes, it is! The funniest thing, the hardest part of what I've been battling and I know many of you have heard this. You probably read it online or heard about what's going on in my personal life and it is very difficult. I've decided not to wear spanx anymore because oxygen is so much more important. But back when I was wearing them, the thing that turns you off from wearing spanx because I was tugging and pulling so hard my thumb went through. Now you know it's because you hate... is there nothing more depressing than having to go buy a bigger pair of spanx?

[Laughter]

It is like you refuse! So it is like wrapping a Polish sausage up and it's just horrible. So you're trying to tug those things on. Look, the men are going what is spanx?

[Laughter]

If you don't know what spanx are that means your wife is skinny and we don't like her!

[Laughter]

So my thumb went through so the fat just goes splbb! I thought I had a tumor at first. But the fat just kind of goes phlbb-phlbb. It's terrible! Have you ever tried to get dough back in the Pillsbury can? It just doesn't have it. So I had to put on the tank top spanx with the little shortsy spanx so I had double reinforcement. Then you get that on and then you get your clothes on; then they want to come put a microphone on you -- and then you have a hot flash.

[Laughter]

I will have to have every bit of this surgically removed before I can do anything. If I

have one more hot flash I'll electrocute myself with this microphone on. All that to say it's been the most interesting time in my life because I am a stand-up comedian and my husband passed away. So about six months ago, or seven or eight months ago we buried him and it was the most difficult thing, and it is so hard.

But now the hardest part is going out with friends that you always went out with as a couple and now they ask me out all the time. And I feel like the little merry widow trudging along. I told my girlfriend, "Is that how you're going to be? You're going to invite the merry widow?"

And she said, "Well, I don't think you should say that; that might be a porn movie."

[Laughter]

Is there nothing sacred in this world? Merry widow is a porn movie? So we had to get online just to see if it was.

[Laughter]

I'm just kidding! We can't get online. My husband died with the passwords!

[Laughter]

I can't get online. I can't go to the A.T.M. He has fixed it so I can't get a red cent. All that to say people always come up to you and say, "Oh, I'm so sorry to hear you lost your husband."

I go, "I know where he is!"

And then we did lose him the other day. They came and ploughed the field that we decided to bury him in and they moved that little marker that had his name on it. We put a little bench there; it's been my little widow's bench and it's been so precious. And now we've lost him. So we had to get a metal detector to go out there and find my husband in a field in the hills of Tennessee.

Well, I found four cannon balls, somebody's old watch, and a car muffler. And then I finally found him; so there he was, between the cannon balls and the car muffler. Because we got a metal thing that we kept poking into the ground until it hit the top of the coffin and there he was. So we found him, I know where he is. And he is waiting for me in heaven having a good old laugh. Thanks for having me!

James: God love you!

Chonda: I love you! Look at him standing up.

James: It's a miracle! Isn't it?

Chonda: I think that's the first time you ever stood to invite me in.

[Laughter]

Can I put this down now.

James: I'm wired up so much I'm afraid I'll break a wire.

Chonda: Me too! Y'all don't want to miss a thing; do you? Why do they wire you before you go to the bathroom?

[Laughter]

There's probably some sounds they're going to dub in later.

[Laughter]

I should have prayed louder. I think the whole mechanics of this, we've come a long way baby. You remember when they used to have the microphone that hung down, while they're trying to follow you talking. I can remember -- I can remember watching you with the microphone hanging down and all of the sudden you see a little bit of it

and you'd think, I think he's got a tarantula on his head!

[Laughter]

I just love technology. But yeah, this is big doings! Same old set though. Y'all need to...

James: Need to remodel?

Chonda: We're in the same old house this year! I was hoping y'all could get a bigger house. We need to do this show like on a porch with a Jacuzzi!

[Laughter]

Jacuzzi for Jesus! That's what I'm saying. Because here's the thing -- I'm going to tell you, now I know for some of you, this will air at an appropriate time but my girlfriends are trying so hard to get me to know that there is still life for me and there's still companionship. So we stayed up all night last night looking at one of them dating sites. Have you ever seen something like that? Well, you better not!

[Laughter]

Betty: Yeah, he better not!

Chonda: I have never in my life been more entertained. Men take pictures of themselves and put it on there thinking this is really going to get me a girl!

[Laughter]

And it will be like a 100 year old mullet growing out of the back of their heads. It is the funniest! And you have to be careful because as a Christian you want to love them... but you do have to laugh.

It's like, they have Christian dating sites. Well, have you seen those? Well, of course you haven't! This is a whole new world of material. It's like -- the Christian dating

sites, Lord love them. Y'all, if you're going to be a man and you post your picture to get a date try to not look like you're laying in a coffin.

[Laughter]

Good gravy! This is going to be a whole new world for me. My husband is upstairs -- upstairs! He's just upstairs! We didn't put him in the ground, we just laid him...

[Laughter]

This is what I told somebody the other day. They said, "How are you doing?" And you feel bad after your husband passed. For a certain amount of time you don't want to have to cry every time they say, "How are you doing?" But then you feel bad if you don't cry, they're going to think I'm a jerk.

[Laughter]

There's that fine line of how long do you -- it's just pitiful. So when you're doing great because the joy of the Lord is your strength and you can press on and move on -- and you know it is the Lord because in my own abilities, I would not be able to laugh and cut up like this, and without the hope of knowing I'm going to see him again, you wouldn't be able to cut up like this.

James: You know what else I know?

Chonda: I'm psycho! That's what! I'm either a wonderful Christian or psychotic!

James: You know what I know? That when you walk in here with us you're home, you're family, and you're loved, and we're having a blast. Aren't we all having a blast with Chonda?

[Applause]

Chonda: The sweetest -- the sweetest thing, and of course your audience has always

been so wonderful to me and these are the best giving people I've ever known in my life. But the e-mail and the Facebook and the notes and all that that while David was ill, and even David and I were on this show and he talked very honestly about where he was in his life and his alcoholism and all of that and the damage that had already been done to his body, we knew it was going to take a toll eventually.

The sweetest thing and I say this to -- and it will probably embarrass you but my phone would ring, my cell phone in the intensive care unit and it would always be James and Betty. They would pray out loud and I could put it on speakerphone and he would lay there and hear it and just close his eyes. And you could just see the peace that could come over him even in the roughest moments.

I remember you calling the day of his funeral, this is what I love about... you're my spiritual daddy and you know that. So my spiritual daddy calls and says, "How are you doing? How are you holding up? We love you. Now when are you getting back to work?" [Laughing]

Because he knows me; you guys and I have walked this journey almost 15 years now -- we've known each other. And if I sit and wasted the pain that comes along in our lives, then what a true waste that is but God does not promise us easy days but he promises that he will work for good everything that comes along. Good, bad, or ugly, he will work it to his purpose if you allow him.

And so yes, I didn't go straight to work the next day but several months later when I started getting stronger and I said, "You know? This is what I do for a living." And the line is so long after a night to how many widows -- young widows.

I always feel like I was too young to be a widow but I meet the 30 year old and people have lost their husbands in the service. I am walking out my own grief process with girlfriends out there that have faced the same thing. And that is the body of Christ. That is what we're supposed to do.

James: Now you have a great anointing, I believe, I don't believe anointing is falling

down. I believe anointing is divine enabling. You have a special God-given enabling to be more effective than you've ever been. You're funnier than you've ever been. Everything is even better timed than it's ever been; you've always been a master of timing. But it is now moved into a more supernatural realm. I think you've gone beyond just having people laugh to healing hearts. I don't think they're just laughing.

Don't you think that she's got a real gift God's given her?

[Applause]

Betty: And that's not to say that you don't still feel some of that pain. That pain is there but we can praise him through that pain.

Chonda: Yes! And you know what I've learned? There are these key things that I learned that you can do. And it sounds -- especially when you're in the deep grief when you're very next breath is painful to take, when you can't run across a little picture that's on a corner of your house or you go through a magazine and there's a song or a note or something that triggers, I had 31 years with the love of my life and my high school sweetheart; Dated seven years before that. I haven't been on a date in 40 years.

So when those moments come that you think you're just going to fall apart, I want to tell you from the bottom of my heart, it really does work to begin to praise the Lord. You praise the Lord that I'm breathing. Praise the Lord that tomorrow is going to get better. I began to praise the Lord that I can turn on a song that lifts me up. And you surround yourself with that and you push back that dark like you're fighting for your life -- because you are!

It doesn't mean you don't grieve. It doesn't mean I curl up in a bed by myself at night, many nights still, and cry myself to sleep. It doesn't mean that you don't miss Robin or when the holidays come along, but this Christmas I was completely alone -- and yet not. I curled up and played music and truly celebrated the birth of the one who is the only one that is going to help me make it through this year. And if you keep focusing

on that and not just dwelling on your own pain, I promise you -- I promise you you'll make it. I promise you!

James: You know what I'd like to do if you just kind of zero in here where I can talk to you real personal, if you would. When you were talking about the calls, I really sense that there were some -- and I don't think it was just like some, maybe just a few, I think it is probably quite a few of you -- but you say, "I wish somebody would call me." I want you to know, I know how you feel and I'm trying to reach out to you and do what I tried to do for Chonda and others that I get to do it for, I want to just sort of take your hand and I want to really pray for you and with you because God really wants to take your hand, he wants to your whole life in his arms.

Father, I just pray for women that are hurting right now, girls that are hurting. Lord, there are some grandmothers that are lonely and hurting. And Lord, there are men that are hurting and they're not Superman. They hurt, and some are defeated. And Lord, I want you to let them know that they are not overlooked, they're not unimportant, they're not insignificant. If they can be important to me sitting here and sense, I feel what they feel, what Chonda was talking about, I identify. I just pray for the one that felt like nobody cared. That they will know right now somebody cares and they'll know above all you care and they'll know we care.

And Lord, in some supernatural way would you brighten their day? If they just have to stand up and say, "Somebody cares! God cares! Jesus loves me, this I know. Not only does the Bible tell me so but that man is telling me that and I believe it." God, please comfort them. I pray for that comfort.

I don't know where you are in your journey but there is a telephone number there that is an 800 number. You know why it is an 800 number? It is paid for by love. It's paid for by people who join with us and say we want people who feel like nobody wants to talk to them, nobody will pray with them. Well, they will. And a lot of the people in our prayer center have felt every pain that the people that call in have felt. It is amazing how people connect.

And we have many people who call our prayer center to say, "I just needed somebody to talk to." Well, call and we'll pray with you. You get a busy, you say, "Well, I'll tell you, I'll wait a while. Maybe some desperate people are calling. I'll call a few minutes later."

But we want you to know we love you. And all the people in the studio, already there is a spirit of prayer; they're praying for you. Chonda, I just want you to know you are a gift from God. It is our joy to be able to be your family and your friend. And you've got an open invitation any time you're just passing through, you call us ahead of time and we'll get everybody to come in here that needs to smile. And you just -- this is your place, this is your home. I know it is an old house and we need to redo it and all that.

Chonda: Yes. Well, we need to talk about spending...

James: We'll try to fix up this old house!

[Laughter]

But would you say thanks to Chonda for being a blessing? And to all of you who are watching we want to do everything we can to help. Betty's story, *Free to be Me*, this beautiful little girl that fell in love with this old guy and married me, 52 years married. It's been a glorious journey. I've messed it up a few times and she's put me back together.

This is a devotional, 40 days of devotions that Betty has written just sharing her journey. It will bless you. We'll send it to you. Laugh Lines, this is Chonda and her brother, Dr. Mike Courtney helped people get set free and deal with issues. We'll be glad to send that to you. You help us give water, just ask for it. Let me tell you this.

Chonda, you know how much you love what we do. We're going to drill water wells and let me tell you what you're going to see. You're going to love this! These are little doodle bugs. I don't know when anything has moved me much more than seeing little kids in a public school, in Colorado, say, "We're going to drill water wells. We're going

to use these little doodle bugs. We're going to make them all different colors. We just want to help." And they've got little eyes.

Watch this. You are going to be inspired!

Begin video clip

>> Got the kids in here, said this is what we're going to do. We're making doodle bugs. This is what they look like. This is the reason why. Because there is children out there that don't have fresh clean drinking water. If you made two doodle bugs you will have saved one person. So if you sacrifice your lunchtime and make two doodle bugs, you'll save one person.

>> Yeah, and you can make them different colors! That's the funnest thing. It's not all the same. See these ones... this one is all like pink, yellow, and green. And I don't even know how much colors this one is!

>> It made me happy that it's not just us involved in this project, other people in our school want to help people in need of fresh water.

>> I made this Broncos doodle bug; pretty well done. And I made this one pretty fast!

>> Knowing that I helped people and that it's fun for me to do. At recess I usually don't do anything, just walk around and talk to people. I thought why not use my time for a good meaning?

>> Every five minutes a kid dies and I thought, saving a kid's life was a lot better than playing on the swing.

>> We're making doodle bugs for Water for Life. It makes me feel happy because I'm actually saving people's lives. They have nasty dirty water like mud water that can make you very sick to where you can go to a hospital.

>> I learned that we're sacrificing; and nice and kind and generous, all that kind of stuff. And the second I heard about this, I wanted to do it right off the bat. I just didn't

want it to go every Friday I wanted it to be every day. People need clean water and it's not good to not have clean water!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Wow! Did you not get blessed by what you just saw?

[Applause]

Betty: Can't say it any better!

Chonda: That is adorable!

James: Wow! If you want to know what Jesus sounds like -- like those children! I can't add anything to it, Betty.

Betty: They said it all!

James: They absolutely did.

Betty: And so profound, so clear and so truthful. Kids are very truthful.

Chonda: Completely unjaded. They're so not jaded and they totally get the basic -- the basic need going, "Wow! It's terrible to not have clean water."

We hear these advertisements or we watch these clips and we see all this and as adults we've become so jaded that we go, "Well, it's really my dollar is not going to matter." Or "I wonder how much that's really going out there." We've become so skeptic. And here's kids that haven't gotten that way yet and they totally get it. If our hearts could go back to live just like those.

That's why Jesus said, "Suffer the little children. Come as a child." All those things he related to; he wanted us to relate to him as little children and they're the ones teaching us now. That was awesome!

James: I think that you've heard it and I think all you need to know is James, what do we do? Those little children are anxious to do it. And we want to participate. This whole studio audience was just electrified, captivated by the love in those little children.

We're committed and this is why we always try to tell you what we do because we set the goal. We want to drill another 500 water wells where the missionaries have said, "The need is great here and we know there is water here. Bring the rigs." Be at different levels but the average cost, some are shallower, some are much deeper, the average is still \$4800 to drill a well.

Bear in mind, people like you have already paid for all the drilling equipment and now then we just need to go and take care of the cost to drill it there. So we have to move it around, drill, case it, get the pump. We're asking you to make a gift, \$48; that gift will give basically 10 people water the rest of their life. My goodness! And \$144 will give 30! The cost of the well is \$4800. You could give a well perhaps; those children, that's what they targeted to do. They're successful. We can do it as couples, as individuals, as church groups, sometimes businesses and companies do it. But individuals do it.

Father, I pray everyone who can will; in Jesus' name.

You may say, "James, I can't give an entire well, I can give \$1200 or \$2400," pray three people join with you giving \$1200 or pray another person joins giving \$2400. Whatever you can do.

We have some gifts to give you. We've got the beautiful painting by Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel" for those of you who give a well or \$1200 or more toward the well, other gifts to inspire and to bless you.

Would you go online right now, LifeToday.org? Use your bankcard like a check. It is immediately there. We know we're able to tell the missionaries, I'm telling you the people are going to do it and it really enables us to get ahead of the game. If you want to call use the phone, dial the number there on the screen, take your bankcard, make the gift God puts on your heart. If you want to write a check and mail it, make the check to *LIFE*. Thank you so much for doing it.

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

In the studio

James: I really am grateful for the way you express God's love like those little children, what an example! And Laugh Lines; but this is a testimony of how you can be set free. You will meet Chonda's brother, Dr. Mike Courtney in another program. They've started a ministry that is absolutely phenomenal. So if you'd like to have this book that will be very helpful today, you help us give water, just ask for it. Would you join us in saying thanks to Chonda Pierce for being with us? Chonda, we love you!

Chonda: Love you too!

James: You be great!

Chonda: I love y'all so much!

James: Thank you so much for watching. Tell all your friends to watch *LIFE Today*.