

3/10/15
Week 11 WFL: Last week
Andy McQuitty

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! We're so glad that you could join us. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: We have Andy McQuitty with us. Andy is at Irving Bible Church. It's a tremendous church. It's not only Bible-centered, it is Christ-centered. Sometimes you can just start looking at the Word and you don't act much like Jesus anymore; it's like we've got to prove a point. Not so with this pastor; you talk about having a shepherd's heart and really wanting to get everybody into the fold of God's security and his shadow but also, if there's one still out there, he wants us to go get that sheep and he's after them. And he understands what it is to fight a battle that no one wants to battle, no one wants to fight. And actually came here at the very beginning of the battle with cancer, came back later with his wife when it looked like miracles were unfolding.

He began to talk and was writing for the church his notes from the valley of the shadow, in many instances, and he knew what was there possibly, and was trusting God, and we were all praying with him, and we just kind of walked that through.

When he was talking about it and I was reading, because my personal assistant, Carol Stertzer goes there and loves the church, she and her husband David and their beautiful little adopted daughter from China, Mia. So she would be sure I always saw what Andy wrote.

By the way, since you got out of the battle, she's still sending me all your stuff. It's a different battle now. It's so good -- it's so good! Andy has not only a great gift to communicate and preach, but to write. So when he was sitting here, I said, "I hope you'll write a book about this."

So here it is. I want you to see it. It is very, very important that you see this because for many of you, it's not only going to be life-enriching, it's going to be life-changing, maybe lifesaving! *Notes from the Valley: A spiritual travel log through cancer.*

Would you welcome Andy McQuitty to *LIFE Today*?

Andy, we're really glad you're here.

Andy: Thank you, James and Betty.

James: Let's talk about the journey and let's talk about the notes and so forth. When you got this diagnosis it was not a good diagnosis. For the viewers who may not know, it was pretty serious; wasn't it? Tell them what you heard.

Andy: It was pretty serious, James. I got a call one day from my doctor; had a colonoscopy and it had showed the presence of a huge tumor that had broken through the walls of my colon. He said, "Andy, get in here fast. It's cancer and it's serious." And it was.

Went in, had the tumor removed and found it had spread through the lymph nodes, and I had two other tumors in my body. That's why they staged it at stage four. It was very serious. I was given an eight percent chance of survival.

James: Eight percent!

Andy: Eight! It's better than seven.

[Laughter]

But it was pretty grim. We just began a journey through the valley, like almost two million Americans last year were diagnosed with cancer; they began their journey in the valley. As I walked through that valley I just wrote some notes. They captured the kind of questions that I had, the kind of thoughts and fears, the kind of struggles that I had that I think all of us go through, especially those of us who are followers of Christ.

Because the default mode of thinking for many Christians is that if I'm a Christ follower that he's going to spare me from such challenges and trials, and that it's God's job to protect me from such things.

In reality, the scripture is very clear and Jesus himself said that hey, this life is going to be full of such challenges. The apostles, Peter for instance, in First Peter says don't be surprised at the fiery trials that come to you.

James: And you don't get to pick them.

Andy: You don't get to pick them. I think that for people of faith and for those who have yet to come to Christ, and to have faith in him, there are a couple of very important insights, epiphanies if you will, that you have to come to about suffering in general whenever you enter into that valley.

James: Would you share those?

Andy: I think there are two things. I think first of all we've got to accept and understand that suffering in life is inevitable. It is not some sort of aberration; it is not some sort of a silly accident. Suffering doesn't come to us as Christians because God was taking too long of a break and forgot about us or made an accident or made a mistake. The scripture is full of predictions that God's children will pass through the fire, will pass through the flood.

Jesus said, "You will suffer."

Peter said, "Don't be surprised at the fiery trials."

So I think the first thing that I had to come to when I entered the valley was you know what? This is not a mistake. This is actually something that is purposeful; and that's the second insight or epiphany that I think all of us need to come to, and I write about it in the book, is not only is suffering inevitable, it is to be expected.

The scripture is clear through many trials and tribulations we must enter the kingdom of heaven. So the beauty of the epiphany of the inevitability of suffering for the Christian is that for the Christian it is inevitable but it is also purposeful. God is not the author of sin, God is not the author of suffering. God does not make people get cancer. Cancer is collateral damage from the fall.

James: It is an invader.

Andy: It is an invader. We have an enemy, Satan. He is a murderer from the beginning, wants to kill and steal and destroy. That's not God's doing but what God has done is declare that, "I will in my grace and my mercy and my goodness, I will make all these things work together for good for those who are called according to the..."

James: He didn't say they were good at all. He said he would work them for good -- the impossible.

Andy: But he is able to make them work together for good. And so, I just think that the most important thing for us when we enter the valley is to come to grips with the fact that this is not a mistake. It is actually a calling in a sense that God has tapped... I had a very strong sense that when I entered the valley that God had tapped me on the shoulder and said, "I have a project for you. I have a journey for you to take because I have a purpose for this in your life."

See this is where I believe as a biblical Christian in the sovereignty of God that he is able to work all things together for his glory and for the good of his people. And so whenever cancer invades or any other kind of heartache or suffering in this world, I believe for the Christian, the first thing we need to do is to get our mind right about this; that this is not an excuse for sitting on the bench and complaining about "woe is me" and giving up on life. It is not an excuse. Rather, it is an elevated platform for serving.

James: I notice you have, maybe did you have something in the book that you wanted

to refer to or read? Was there something in particular you would want to show? Because I read so many things there that blessed me.

I really want you to get this. Betty and I want to ask you a question. We were going through the same battle with our daughter, at the same time, you know that, with Robin.

Betty, we've wanted to say, what do you say to somebody like us when your daughter had such perfect faith, we all did, and Robin, she said, "I win!" And of course, she wins, she is forever in the presence of the Lord -- she can't lose. She's in him. He's in her. And the fruit that she has sown in the lives of her children and everyone who knew her, it just looks like Jesus springing up. But we still have questions.

Betty: Yeah, we do. Your journey was a little different in that you were the one that had the disease. Our journey was different in that it was our child that had the disease but we were still in the midst of the valley and the battle, so to speak. So I, just like you did, I made notes, I journaled through this journey.

I can't express enough what a blessing that has been to me and it's been a big part of the healing process. You don't get past it. You don't get over it but you walk through it and you learn how to live with God's grace and God's love.

I have to say this; that I knew every moment that he was right in the center of our battle, of our heartache. I knew that he was bigger than life. That's one thing I did come to know, how big his love is and how big he is if we allow him to just come into the midst.

To me, it is kind of sad that sometimes we don't. We want to back away, people want to back away, but it was a time for me when I wanted to grasp hold because there were those dark moments when I felt like, God, if you don't hold on to me, I'm going to lose it. And yet, he taught me so much and I felt his presence and I continue to through the process.

Andy: Betty, I firmly believe that the journey through the valley is hardest on the

family and loved ones of the one who is suffering with cancer or anything else than it is on that particular person because I believe that God gives grace abundant for those who are suffering. And so we're fine -- we're fine in that valley. Robin, I believe was fine in that valley in the grace, in the peace, and the presence of Christ.

James: She was a marvel!

Andy: But your mother's heart was breaking, and James, I know you suffered with that.

Here's the thing. It is very difficult for us, I believe in this world, even though we are believers in Christ; and that death is not the end, that Jesus has become victorious in his resurrection over sin and death and the grave. We believe that death for us is not an ending, it is a commencement. It is not a passing away, it is a crossing over, it is a translation. But even with all of that, it is difficult for us sometimes to understand that the purpose of life for a Christian is not to never die but rather to fulfill God's purpose in their life.

C.S. Lewis is my mentor in this. In his Narnia books he presents Christ as Aslan, the lion. And in one of the books he has a young man named Aravis who suffers in his life. He's shipwrecked and he is scared by wild animals, and there are strange people that he has to stay with.

When he finally meets up with Aslan, the lion, who is the Christ figure at the end, he asked him some pretty pointed questions. Like, "Why, if you love me, why did I have to go through all this? Why was I shipwrecked? Why did these wild animals scare me?" -- This, that, and the other.

And Aslan, Christ, speaks to him and says, "Well, in the first place, you were shipwrecked, right, but on the shore next to the hut of this strange man that I put there to take care of you, and the wild animals that scared you at night were not there to harm you, it was me and I was watching over you."

In other words, Aslan is telling Aravis his story. At which point Aravis asks about his friend, "Well, what about her? What about her?"

And Aslan said, "I tell no one any story but their own."

Robin had her own story. God was writing a story in her life. I believe that he's writing a story in all of our lives and the purpose of our lives, ultimately is not to never die but to fulfill completely the purpose that Christ has given to us.

Hope is so essential for those of us who are going through the valley. I write these *Notes from the Valley* to my brothers and sisters who are coming in the valley after me to try to accomplish a couple of things. First of all, to give them hope -- to give them hope that this journey that God has tapped you for is not a mistake but is purposeful and that he will be with you to help you fulfill that purpose.

And so I just -- I want for people who are entering the valley of the shadow of death through cancer or any other reason or way, I want them to know what their assignment is. I want them to know how to complete their assignment.

So we talk about prayer; we talk about believing prayer. We talk about God's power to heal. Do we learn how to pray like we've never learned to pray before in the valley of the shadow? Absolutely! But we also learn to pray wisely. We learn to pray persistently, patiently, and pliantly; asking God for miracles of healing, and yet being pliant enough in our prayer to submit to him, weaving his answer to our prayer for healing into his ultimate purposes for our life. God's story is being written in all of our lives.

I believe that for us as Christians we're called to glorify him and that's our purpose. And if the story that he has in our lives is to pass through a valley of suffering, that may even lead to death, then it is a glorious and hopeful thing to pursue that and to make it a good journey.

James: You know the thing that is, I think, so meaningful to us in your behalf, those of you who are watching, is that we were in the valley, not only the one he was in but the

battle we were in, and because my assistant, Carol would see everything he wrote from the valley, she would pass them to me, and I was so moved because Andy shared exactly where he was at that moment. And as a man who knew the Bible, and who knew God and loved God, and know there is no limit on what God can do and believes God for miracles, but knows the greatest miracle is a manifestation of the fullness and grace and greatness of Jesus, so that as he would write at whatever level, I would be lifted up.

And I'm thinking, I feel where he is and I'm identifying with what he is going through. And he writes it -- it's an amazing gift God gave him. So much that I said, "You must share this!" So it ended up in this book.

As I said to Andy before we walked out here, there are many people at a different point in their journey and in their valley, wherever it is, whatever the origin, whatever the journey, and I want them to be able to read your notes because it is for you.

So, Andy, we're going to offer this.

It is in the bookstores, you can get it, you can go online and get it, *Notes in the Valley*.

But you know, Andy, because you know, we're mission minded; we love to put God's arms around a hurting world. We're drilling water wells. This is the last week for this emphasis on drilling 500 wells and we're believing God will grant us the entire support we need. We're going to send this to everyone who will just give a cup of water because I think this will be refreshing.

May I just ask you, you appreciate Pastor Andy letting us walk this path with him, in the valley and understand that the Lord is with us in the valley, the shepherd is with us? And so I want you to have this.

Andy, thank you for sharing. Thank you for leading the church into the fullness of God's truth and word and letting him take this journey with you because I know it's been a healing for so many and I know the book will be. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

May I get you to listen to Tammy Trent and our mission overseer for all of Africa, Peter Pretorius? A man that God used to literally change our lives, and to change so many millions of people, totally changed by the power of God. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Tammy: This is such a significant moment. There is no water. No water for miles in this area that they could ever go to.

Pete: Waterborne diseases is still one of the biggest killers of children in Africa.

Tammy: And now they have fresh clean water.

Pete: It is beautiful clean water that will only bring them good health.

Tammy: This is about to change their lives forever!

Announcer: For thousands of people, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, years of sickness and death caused by contaminated water are about to end at the hands of a young boy.

Announcer: The war against contaminated water has been won. Today joy emanates from this field like this water springs from this earth. For these mothers, fathers, sons and daughters have been liberated from a captivity that has held them from the time of their birth.

But on other fields much like this one, the war continues. Contaminated water oppresses, takes lives, and gives nothing back. The power to bring that to an end is now in your hands.

End of clip

In the studio

James: And that is no exaggeration. The power to release the love and the life of God, to literally be an extension of his hands is ours. And Betty, we have found tremendous joy in doing it.

Betty: We really have.

James: And our viewers have.

Betty: I could just feel the anticipation of that little boy holding that handle. And when the first clean water comes out of that pump, what a joyful occasion it was! And the mothers, you could just see the smiles on their faces because they knew it was going to possibly save the lives of the rest of their children because some of them had already lost so much. So we can be a big part of that and continue to because there is still a need out there for the water wells so they can have the same kind of joyful experience you just watched these children have.

James: One of the reasons that our viewers, I think, are so anxious to help not only the need and the threat to life and meaningful existence and opportunity, but also the sense of gratitude, and you know that's really missing too much here in the advanced world, the United States. It's almost like people who even have great need have very little gratitude. And they have so little, and it's such a simple thing and yet it is like the most joyful thing.

I would really like to suggest to all of you who have needs to be grateful that you may have even have an opportunity to have a need met or maybe even in your meager existence you might touch someone else because they are anxious to do that, we're anxious to do that. I want to inspire everyone to do that because that's the heart of God.

And here, during the last week of our emphasis on drilling 500 wells, we're asking every one of you to participate in that joy and simply go to LifeToday.org, go there, or you can dial the phone number there on the screen and take your bankcard and use it

like a check, that's how you should always use them, and make the gift God puts on your heart.

Think about this, most of the support to drill those wells comes from people who give \$48; and that basically, when you break it out, gives ten people water the rest of their life; \$144 gives 30 people water the rest of their life. \$4800 is still the average cost of a well, some more expensive, some less expensive depending upon the depth.

But would you help? Could you give a well? I believe you will if you can. If you gave \$2400 or \$1200, you pray another person matches what you do or three other people join you and we've got a well.

We've got some beautiful gifts to express our thanks to you for what you do for those precious children and their families. And we're going to share Water for Life but we're going to tell them about the water of life. And when you demonstrate that love, it's so much easier to hear and receive. Millions of people come to Christ because we share his love.

Would you please go online right now, LifeToday.org or dial that number and just make the gift God puts on your heart? You're giving the greatest gift, you're giving the gift of life. And we're going to share some gifts with you that will be a source of inspiration to you.

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.

This is the last week! Call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: We will be sending you Betty's wonderful story, *Free to be Me*. But also, if you'd like to have *Notes from the Valley*, this is in the real journey, and it ministers wherever you are in it at whatever point. It really is a gift.

I really diligently, persistently encouraged Andy to write this because basically, it's the only way he's already written it, while he was in the valley on the journey. You're going to be encouraged. We have been -- and you will be.

Thank all of you for being with us and thank you for watching.

Andy, thank you for sharing! Thank you so much! Bless Irving Bible Church. You want to go hear a great preacher? Be with great people? -- Irving Bible Church. You can find it easily. You will be blessed.

Thanks for watching and thanks for your help!

Announcer: Be sure to visit stream.org, a rich and lively source for breaking news, analysis, and entertainment! Stream.org