

5/4/15
Week 19: Spring Mission Feeding
Abby Rike

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: We really count it a privilege to spend this time with you. I don't know if I'm getting it through to you but I want to. You may not believe it but I wish I kind of had you by the hand and really looking right in your eyes and just say, those of you that watch *LIFE Today* and you see the opportunity to touch someone with the love of God and you do it, you can't imagine what an inspiration you are. And then also, the very fact that you would listen to me and to Betty and to our guests, and the confidence that you express in that, we want to say thank you very much.

It may be the first time you're watching, I think you'll be glad that you're watching. We have a woman with an incredible story, *Working It Out: A journey of love, loss and hope*, Abby Rike. And what you need to understand is, the little logo up here says, "As seen on *Biggest Loser*," that program, but that's really not the great loss. You've perhaps lost something. Well, I think you're going to be quite, in some ways shocked by the loss that Abby experienced and it was so much more than just a weight loss.

Would you welcome someone with a real miracle story of the grace of God? Would you welcome Abby to *LIFE Today*, Abby Rike?

Abby, glad to see you.

Abby: Thank you!

James: It says up here, in this incredible story, it says that you were on *Biggest Loser*, and that that became kind of a significant thing for you. What happened at *Biggest Loser* that was important to you?

Abby: I think *Biggest Loser* for me was a place where God brought me to where I could regroup and to rejoin life. See, I would never have gone on the *Biggest Loser*; that was the antithesis of everything that I would ever do. I was raised in east Texas. You don't tell your weight and you sure don't stand in half naked clothes on national television. So two and a half years prior to that on October 13th, 2006, life as I knew it was drastically changed. I was happily married; I had a curly red-headed daughter thriving in kindergarten and a nine-and-a half pound blonde hair blue-eyed

two and a half week old son. And on that Friday the 13th, a man going over 100 miles an hour --

James: And your husband.

Abby: And my husband, I was happily, happily married. We taught debate together, we grocery shopped together, we really liked one another. On that evening a man going over 100 miles an hour hit them head on. I was told that there were no survivors, and I would have sworn that day that I was included in that. I wanted the life that I had. There was no one's life that I would have traded places with. So it speaks to just how big God is because you can't get up on that. You can't get up from that on your own.

Betty: Well, you never expect anything like that.

James: No one ever expects to lose a child much less a whole family.

Abby: When you think of worse case scenarios --

Betty: Everything is going good.

Abby: Right. But if you think in your wildest dream, your worst case scenario, my mind couldn't even go there.

And so I'd grown up with a strong foundation of faith but my life was easy and I was somewhat of a prodigal; and life was pretty easy and it was great and things were fabulous. And if there was ever a currency that was my treasure.

So throughout this -- through the grieving process which is brutal and it's hard. And you can hear about the grieving process but when you start walking through that when life is devastated... and what I've learned is that grief just comes in a variety of packages. Mine was very big and so God provided a platform so that people can know there is hope after devastation.

James: I think most people who are watching right now would say, "I don't even think I could handle it. I think there would have been another casualty. I don't know that I would get through it."

So when it happened, in those first hours and days and months, was that part of the process in your own mind, "I can't live through this? I don't want to live through this. I wish I was gone." You find yourself screaming at God, how can this happen? Why did this person do it? Were they drunk? Was this person drunk, do you know?

Abby: There are allegations that there were substances involved with it.

James: Did they die too in the other car?

Abby: They did. There were absolutely no survivors.

I think by the grace of God I needed him so badly at that point because I was so broken that I didn't have the energy to be mad at that point. But I would have said at that point, if I could have passed this cup, I don't care -- I can remember sitting on the couch saying, "I don't care what good comes from this, if I could pass this cup I would ever time."

James: And so would everybody.

Abby: But I will tell you as you learn, as God redeemed and restored me, and it has been, we're at eight years now, so the first part of it was that I ended up on this crazy television show because I thought, well, maybe if I get healthy, then maybe I won't just exist out my days because God did not design me to exist out my days.

I know that there are people watching and I know they are thinking, "I'm existing out my days."

People can say, "Oh, life's so short -- life's so short." But when you're in the grieving process, life is very long. So I need people to know that God is redemptive and he will restore you. When you are in that pit and it seems like there is not even an ounce of glimmer; that I look where I was sitting there that day to knowing tears of joy that I can share and say, "Hey! You can fake a smile but you can't fake joy. And that's what Jesus provides you."

So at this point it started on this physical journey, and then it's been so much more. I'll tell you the most life-altering thing you can do is be in his Word. It is the most transformative thing you will ever do is to be in his Word.

James: With or without a tragic situation.

Abby: A million percent! And so I will tell you that those first three to four years, people stood in the gap for me when I didn't know what to pray -- the groanings and the utterings, I didn't even know what to pray. It was at the two and a half year mark that I really thought, I can't go on because see, reality had set in at that point. And that was when God ordained those steps to where I ran into a couple in Houma, Louisiana where I was living at that time who had been on this crazy television show. And it was from there is how that all came to be, and then God has made it infinitely more.

James: So even that was a process of the healing, when they asked you to go be on the show, and maybe see what looked like it was impossible then.

[Laughter]

Abby: Hoo! Yes!

James: But the thing is that since then, now you know, Betty and I have been, over two years since we lost our daughter. We find ourselves and Betty has even said to me, "We lost our daughter. Are we just going to keep talking to people who've lost their family?" Because we've had quite a few of them; we didn't know that we would and we try to process it.

Obviously, our pain for the loss and missing our daughter is just very real. It didn't just suddenly become less important or real. But what Betty and I have been reaching out to God for, of course, the healing for our hearts because we miss her. Even though we know, I preached the other night and I said, "Robin's saying, 'Tell them Dad.'"

We even said to thousands of people just a couple nights ago, "Robin is saying, 'Don't miss this. Don't miss heaven. Dad, tell them how great it is.'" So we are. That's comfort, but do you think that as we walk through it, you don't get over it, you live through it. Do you think that we will reach a place where there will be a lighter sense of the loss after maybe time or God doing more things in our life?

Abby: I think that you are completely changed after devastation. I think you are a new creation in Christ and I think he binds you up in a new way. The old you is gone. So in a sense I did. That Abby...

Betty: Is gone.

Abby: Sorry! But where I am now, we're looking at an eternal focus, and that's the shift. You see that's where I had to shift. I had to shift from what I had lost to that I know where they are. Because when you have that kind of devastation, you have to analyze, do I really believe what I think I believe? Are you real? Is there heaven? Are they there? And I came to the resounding conclusion, that yes, I believe everything that I think I believe but I believe it in a much more authentic way.

So the Abby that sits here today can say, if it means that someone knows Jesus and spends eternity in heaven that I lay them down early, earlier than what in my flesh I wanted, then I can stand here today and say that. As flawed as I am, that's where I know God uses everyone. And the opportunities that he's given to say, don't admire me, don't look at me. Admire the one that lives in me. But he can live in you! And that is why I can sit here today and know joy even though I have tears of sadness. There are hard days still but my focus is eternal and I want people to get to know

Jesus and I want them in heaven for the eternal because this is a blink. And so that is where my heart is.

When I talk about, can you stand when heartache comes -- because it will. If you were banking on you become a Christian and life is great and the blessings rain down, God will bless you but they will not look like the worldly sense. So your focus has to be eternal.

Betty: We have had others that have experienced loss, family-wise in many ways and they have also said the same thing, your focus changes -- your eternal focus. The fact that you realize, if you allow him to, God is right in the center of your situation, of your loss, of your pain, and he is not going anywhere. He will walk you through it even when you feel like you can't take another step. He's there to pick you up and say, "Let's go!" He said, "Follow me."

I have to agree with you, God's Word has been such a treasure in our loss. His presence in knowing that the hurt we feel, he feels.

James: I think what I want to try to pass on to you that I know this is where Abby is communicating and what Betty is trying to share, and hopefully you're hearing what, not only I want to share, but what I really believe God would want you to hear, I pray you don't miss this because I don't know where you are in your life's journey. But I know wherever you are in your life's journey God is watching.

And here's the thing. I think it is real important for you to know, he wants to be right in the center of it. He wants to be in the center of your life and he wants you to understand that for your life to be able to make sense of no sense and to be able to walk through the pain and the valley of the shadow of death or whatever comes your way, and boy, there's a lot that's dealt to us. A fallout of the fall is not only death but it is all the stuff that goes with it. So wherever you are, he really wants to be your... not just your comfort but the comforter. He sent the Holy Spirit, comforter, to live in us so we're gaining from that. But please get this.

What I saw with our daughter and Abby's already alluded to it, everything is in light of eternity. She knows that her children, she will see them and her husband. And we know we'll see our daughter. But here's what you must get. Jack Hayford, a wonderful minister, a great man of God, a great writer, a great song writer wrote Majesty, "worship his majesty," and scores of others, and he pastored Church on the Way in California. Jack Hayford saw our daughter go to heaven. One of the things he saw; he saw her saying, "It's good to go into the house of the Lord."

He just -- hear that passage. She's approaching the host of heaven coming to greet her. He watched her pacing her pace, going into the eternal presence of the Lord. But the thing he said that really moved me, Abby, because I'm an evangelist, I want everybody to know the Lord. He said, as far

as he could see, he said he looked beyond Robin and as far as he could see there were people walking into the house, the eternal house of God. And as tears are welling up now because I'm thinking, I don't want anybody to miss that. I don't want anybody to miss that.

Abby said a minute ago, "My family, I know where they are." Do you get that? And she is saying what I'm saying, what God is saying, "I don't want you to miss it."

Jesus died for us to experience it not only there but here. Our daughter Robin brought heaven here. She didn't get to know her kids very long, they were very young, very small, but they brought a lot of heaven to her then. They would have likely for the rest of their lives. Our daughter did, and brought heaven to her family. Please don't miss it. Don't miss it!

And then if your heart is broken like ours have been broken, let the only healer of our heart step in right now. Abby wrote an incredible story, *The Journey*. It is in the bookstores. You can get it. You can go online and get it. But it will be a blessing.

Here's what, Abby, what I want to do right now is I want to pray with our viewers that are watching because I feel like they identify with what you're saying, where you know eternity is, you see everything in a different perspective. And no matter where we are, God will walk through it with us and never leave us.

Father, I pray for our viewers right now. I feel like there are many people who some may just be on their face on the floor and saying, "God, you're the only one picking me up." Let them know you got them. Lord, I pray you'd heal broken hearts. I pray those that are watching that have never received you, Jesus, that right where they are say, "Jesus, come into my heart. You died for me. Come and live in me and give me new life; in Jesus' name."

Now look at me here. If you prayed that prayer and you'd like to just call, we wrote a book for you, I did, and a Bible study that's called *Knowing God as Father*; it's a simple Bible study. You can just call and say, "I just gave my life to the Lord. I don't want to miss the heaven that Robin's in and Abby's kids and her husband are in. I don't want to miss it. I want to be there forever. But I want some of that heaven now."

Wouldn't you agree, Abby, we've had to have heaven come in us right now in the midst of all of our pain or we wouldn't make it? We've got that presence of the Lord.

Abby: It's a peace that passes all understanding. And that's why I come and retell and share is because at the end of the day it has nothing to do with me. I want others to know that kind of peace that transcends hard circumstances.

James: And only God can give us that.

Abby: Only God will give you that.

James: That's what I'm believing right now that he's doing even for you so you call.

Would you like to tell Abby, thank her for telling her story and sharing it with us, and people all over the world? You know what we get to do? Sometimes you see heartache and you can't do anything about it. I know anybody would have liked to stop that accident -- stop that person from doing the weaving in and out, whatever they were doing. But let me show you something right now. You're going to look and see somebody with a broken heart. Yes, you are.

But here's the thing you need to know. We can stop the process that's breaking hearts like this. We really can. This is not wishful thinking. This is an absolute fact. I want you to listen. I want you to hear God through it all and then say, "Okay, God. How do I fit in?" Watch.

On the mission field

>> When the fighting started in my village, my husband and some of the other relatives were killed. I took my children and we ran away.

Song:

Well, it's like
I don't know
Losing everything you own
Nothing matters
And all is broken

>> We walked for a month and a half. We spent the last two weeks of our journey without food.

Song:

Is this really
What you're after
Is this really
What you want

>> My children got very weak because of the hunger and then one child died. Even now we are still suffering. We are still hungry. This is a disaster. I have lost my husband and a child. I have no hope for the future. I do not see a solution. I have to ask God to help us.

Song:

Did you ever
Really want me
Did you ever
Really care
Did you ever
Really love me at all?

In the studio

James: I don't know what goes in your mind when you watch those images. I find myself at home, when Betty and I watch our program, because we will, and then I'll see the images or when I'm looking at them here or when on the mission fields you see them, I wonder how many are prone to turn away? I know no one would ever mean it that way, they just can't stand to look at the pain.

Well, we don't have to look at the pain, we can correct the pain. You see, there is some pain and if you ever watch St. Jude's specials or get their mail, Betty and I support St. Jude's little children. We want them well and so many of them never get well. And they'll even tell you, "We're trying to find a way to make them well."

Well, we found a way to make them well. It is not just a prayer; it is being an answer to prayer. We can give them food. These bowls, and I'll never pick up an orange bowl like this that I won't remember the old tin cans and plastic bags that they would bring to try to get -- they didn't have anything but just -- some brought oil cans. Some were bent up oil cans that they had to pry the rest of the lid off to get something in it. And our viewers kept seeing them do that, Betty and they said, "Why don't you give those children a bowl?"

And the missionaries said, "We can't afford to buy bowls. They're starving. We can't spend money on bowls."

And our viewers said, "We can! We'll give them a bowl, heat resistant, got a place to hold it."

I only tell that to say it was because of people like you saw something even the missionary wouldn't even consider -- and it's good that we consider it! It's good that we realize that the only hope for those people is the freedom to someday be able to go forward; to get them out of the dominance of others. And we work toward that too. I want to give them all the life and freedom Jesus came to make possible that so many of us have had the blessings and benefit of and forgot who gave it to us.

But I don't think you have. I'm asking you to not only give a bowl because many of you, we will, we'll try to give all of them a bowl but we've got to put something in it. And we've got 25,000 children right there where you saw that woman talking in southern Sudan. It's terrible! 400,000 that we've located -- 425,000 total that we've got them, all we need is the food to feed them. \$30, \$50, \$100 -- this is not an exaggeration, this is the truth -- \$30, \$50, \$100 we can feed three, five, ten children for the next several months.

I mean you make a gift today, it will keep giving because we know what we're doing -- the missionaries know. Would you right now go to LifeToday.org? Just go online. Or would you dial the number? And either way, take your bankcard and use it like a check to do the best thing you'll ever do and that is give life; would you do it please?

If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call the number and tell us you're mailing it because we have to -- we will start calling the missionaries immediately in these programs to say, "All right. Go ahead. Get the first part. It's coming." 400,000 -- 25,000 more in Sudan where just all hell has broken loose. And they're precious people, many of them are Christians; many of them are being persecuted like they are all over the world right now because they're Christians, like I think in the free world. We're going to experience more of that and it's tragic. It should never happen. And if we release the love of God and the power of God, it's the only way we preserve anything precious, the only way we're going to give them life.

We have some gifts for you to help you grow spiritually that we'll be doing and saying thank you with because we love you. Please go online or call the number and make the gift God put on your heart. And from the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Disease, malnutrition, starvation -- all terrible human atrocities being faced every day by people living in remote and impoverished areas of Africa. Those at greatest risk are the children.

This month, 400,000 children are depending on us for survival. And now in South Sudan the suffering has intensified and our feeding efforts are desperately needed by an additional 25,000

children. Our mission teams are in place but your support is critically needed to replenish and distribute food supplies immediately. When you call or go online today and make a life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100, you will provide urgently needed food to three, five, or ten children for the next three months.

As our way of saying thank you, we'll send you *Heirs to the Kingdom*, four powerful messages on audio CD or U.S.B. flash drive. You'll also receive the award-winning book, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children please request *The Story*, a running narrative Bible to help you engage with God's Word more easily.

And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed 100 children you may 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: Well, as I said just a moment ago, from the bottom of my heart I thank you. Betty and I both say thanks.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, how I long for you to read this and get it. That as fearfully and wonderfully as our body is made, it is a picture of how he wants, Jesus wants his body, the church to be. Phenomenal truth! Please just know that we're sending this to say thanks, along with the other incredible I think blessings.

Working It Out, Abby Rike, what a story. A miracle that she could lose her whole family, and yet hold on to life and want so much to share it with others. The book in the bookstores, *Working It Out* or you can get it online.

Remember visit stream.org, go there every day and learn and grow.

Would you join Betty and me again saying thanks to Abby for being a blessing?

Abby, bless you sweetheart. Thank you.

Thank all of you so much. Tell your friends to watch *LIFE Today* -- and share life today!

Announcer: Introducing stream.org, a rich and lively source for breaking news, analysis, and entertainment. Stream.org is a new information stream where those concerned about our nation's course can now gather for news, wisdom, and inspiration. Working together we will see the promise declared in Psalm 46:4, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." Be sure to visit stream.org, a new site to unite us!