

6/11/15
Week 24
Spring Mission Feeding, Last Week
Pete Wilson

James: I'm so glad. Thank all of you! It's such a joy to be able to share this time with you. I'm James Robison; my wife Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

What Keeps You Up at Night? This is one of the most interesting covers I've seen. There's a clock down here. It looks like an alarm clock but you know if you're awake, you don't need an alarm clock because you can't sleep. And you've got all of these little sheep up here -- people count sheep.

Have you ever counted sheep when you can't sleep? I don't even know where that even came from -- count sheep. But you can't sleep. What troubles you?

Pete Wilson at Cross Point Church in Nashville, he's a young guy. To me, he's like a kid; frankly, he looks like he ought to be at Vanderbilt in school or somewhere.

Welcome Pete Wilson, if you will, to *LIFE Today*.

Pete, good to have you back!

Pete: Good to see you guys. Good to see you, Betty!

James: When was the last book that you had when you came here to be with us?

Pete: The last time I was with you guys was *Empty Promises*.

James: So now we've got a sleep problem. Do you have all these issues you write books about? Or do you watch other people have these issues?

Pete: I actually do have every one of these issues.

[Laughter]

I hate to admit it but I do. On a regular basis, my life is kind of a mess.

James: So you just write about Pete's mess and people want to read about it.

Pete: I do because they tend to have the exact same mess that I have. It's part of the human condition, I think.

James: So you're just comforting people by telling them we're all in a mess and this is where you live?

Pete: Hopefully, we've got some answers to all of this mess.

James: Because I think that would be the key. So evidently, you do because your books do really well. *What Keeps You Up at Night*, you can go online and get it. I tell you what, if you'll be nice, I'd send you one. Be nice, stay there and watch. Okay, Pete. Cut to the chase; what's this about?

Pete: This book is really about, as a pastor, just observing so many people who struggle with fear and they struggle with anxiety and they struggle with worry. It's interesting, I was preparing for a series on fear once at church and started looking through -- there are basically 125 different commands or imperatives that Jesus gives us in the gospels. Of those 125, 21 of them deal with the topic of fear.

Over and over it will say, "Do not be afraid." "Do not worry about this." More than anything else Jesus said, "Do not be afraid." I think that Jesus realized that fear would be something that we would all struggle with. We would struggle with anxiety, and we struggle with worry.

I just thought, if Jesus thought that this was that important of a topic, I think this is a topic I need to be able to dive into, spend some time researching it, spend some time writing about it because I know it is something that I've struggled with in my life.

James: Did you see it in your congregation and people you talked to, the things they would bring you? They would bring you like their fears and their hang ups and whatever it was that was troubling them, it would be fear related?

Pete: Absolutely. Bottom line, what I discovered is fear is a thief and really robbing people of living the life that God has for them. It was interesting to me that -- I'm not saying this in my own life but we can trust Jesus for our eternity; we have a tough time trusting him with this day. We have a hard time trusting him with our marriage or trusting him with our kids.

James: Trusting him for tomorrow.

Pete: Yes! So I thought you know what? I think this is part of the journey. So for me, really, the goal of this book was not so much to fear less but how can we trust God more? Because if we'll learn to trust God more, a lot of the things that we have fear and anxiety and worry about, over time it will begin to disappear.

Betty: Don't you think if we can give this fear to God and let him direct us that we'll make better decisions in our life? A lot of times we make decisions out of fear. Out of panic or...

Pete: Fear paralyzes you and establishes the limits of your life. So if you fear heights, you'll stay low. If you fear outside, you'll stay inside. If you fear people you'll be lonely. If you fear failure you'll never try.

God's used you guys in very powerful ways but I bet there have been moments where you've struggled with but what if we try this and it doesn't work? And thank God you pushed through that fear of failure and you allowed God and you trusted God. Look how he's worked in your life.

James: Yeah, I've had, I'd say, the Lord has given me a wonderful grace to trust. I'm afraid of thunderstorms, by the way. Is there such a thing as...?

Pete: That's what keeps you up at night.

James: Keep me away from them at night. I don't want to fly into one. I happen to be a pilot; I don't fly anymore but flying airplanes, there you go, you want to stay away from the storms. So I don't ever want to get in one. But I think that's a healthy sort of fear, to stay out of something that could hurt us. It is like pain can keep you from worse pain so it can be a friend.

But you're talking about a fear that is a panic that causes you to worry, to be troubled when you should be trusting. You said that you've experienced some of this yourself. So when you say it's your mess not just others. What ways were you troubled with fear and challenged?

Pete: I'll tell you a real practical way. I know that you'll understand this. But even as a pastor, there would be times that I would finish a series of messages on a Sunday and I'd go home, and even on my way home I'd start to worry about oh, my goodness. I have to turn around and preach again in six days. I don't know what I'm going to say next week. You know what? I'd just finished watching God's faithfulness in my life in that day but I'm already worried about whether or not he is going to provide six days from now. I've seen it in that. I've seen it in my

parenting. There have been times that I've been paralyzed, in parenting, to do the right thing with my kids. So I think there's a lot of everyday things that we face that can really take our focus off of God and then what happens is we begin to focus on the problems. That's when it just starts to kind of become this kind of oppressive thing that keeps us from living the life God has for us.

James: I guess I sense you really are trying to help people. You say you can have peace while you're chasing your dream. You can trust God with a dream. What I found in my life because I have dreams, but I lost my dreams pursuing his dream. Then as I would see my dreams fulfilled, I kept wanting to know is your dream fulfilled? Help me to focus on your vision and your dream. It's incredibly liberating when you get caught up in what is on his heart than just what's on our mind. And it's amazing how the things that we want the Father seems to deliver because He loves His kids. It's amazing!

Pete: It is! There is a passage that I talk about a lot in the book. It's really the passage that for me, helped me begin to understand okay, this is how I can really learn to trust God. It is Psalms 121. It will be a passage you're probably familiar with. But it just says: I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? That's the first verse. I think that's the first step is it's this idea to lift up your eyes to the mountains. That's a Hebrew expression that meant a lot more than just your physical eyes. It was talking about how we have this human freedom; every person has this freedom to choose where they put their focus, where they put their attention. So this first verse is saying look, you have a choice in your life what you're going to focus on. So I lift my eyes to the mountain.

And that verse two is: Where does my help come from? It comes from the maker of heaven and earth.

James: Of the mountains.

Pete: That's right! So now I have this reminder, okay, I get to choose where I put my focus. I can put my focus on God instead of my problem or my fear or my worry.

And now I have this reminder that he's the creator. He is the author of life, not me. That's where a lot of my fear came from and I think that's where a lot of our fear comes from for everyone is we forget that he's the author. We forget this idea that he's God and we're not. There's a God and it is not me. And when I begin to understand that, so much of the things that I have fear and anxiety and worry about, they start to disappear. So I love this. I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? It comes from the maker of heaven and earth. And this third verse is beautiful. He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber. I love that idea that --

James: By the way, Satan actually threw that as an accusation at Jesus trying to get you to act in foolishness and try to prove God rather than trust God; test God rather than trust God. So if the enemy took that verse, which the devil knows the Bible, he'll use it against you. He really will and he'll twist it and misrepresent it and misapply it. But it must be important for the devil to have focused on it. So a lot of people are in a mess because they can't see the reality of that; how ever-present the Father is.

Pete: "He who watches over you." And I love that! It is this idea that God is the watcher and I'm the watchee. I'm the kind of human being that needs to be watched over.

James: By a great father, an able father -- capable, strong, secure, everlasting. You are a father, and you've had some experiences with your children. I think you had something happen with your son that really moved you and didn't you tell me you actually got a picture of it or something?

Pete: This was a couple years ago. I'll set up the story for you. We were out on a hike; hiking in the Smoky Mountains. I have three boys. My wife and I have three boys.

James: And that is over on the eastern part of the United States. It doesn't mean they're smoking in the mountains. It is not pot city; it is Smoky Mountains, there is a haze and they're very beautiful, especially in the fall.

Pete: They're gorgeous -- and it was the fall. We were hiking, and on a great hike. My youngest son at the time was just three. We got to this place on the trail that there's this valley. It's not -- I mean it's probably 10 feet deep. It is not a huge valley but this is a rickety old... really, it's not even a bridge, it is a tree that's cut in half and laid across this valley. We get to the spot and my other two boys go across.

James: How old were they? The older ones?

Pete: At that time they would have been five and seven. So they walk across on their own. The youngest, Brewer, he's three; he watches the older brothers go so he wants to go.

James: Now was there not like no rails or anything on it?

Pete: There's one little rail and it's leaning over to the side. It is not a real safe condition but he wants to do it because you saw his older brothers do it so he wants to do it, I'm going to let him do it. Well, my wife is on the other side of the bridge and she doesn't think that's a great idea. But I let him start to go across the bridge, but I wasn't going to let him do it alone; right? I'm

with him. In fact, I'm so close to him, I can hear him breathing. He's scared to death but he is determined.

James: He's looking where he's going. He ain't looking back to see what you're doing.

Pete: Here's the photo. I just love this photo.

[Laughter]

He's headed across that bridge. What's so important...

James: He's a cute little guy. Your wife must be a doll!

Pete: Yes. He looks just like her. I look -- I'm so glad my wife took that picture because when I look at that picture, what I realize, he had tremendous fear. I could hear his deep breathing. He thinks he is doing it all by himself but I'm right there with him. At any one moment as his father, if I think he is in danger, if I think he is going to fall, I'm going to snatch him right up. That's why I love that verse in Psalms of: He will not let your foot slip. He is a good Father.

James: He didn't know you were there but I mean you actually have your arms basically under his armpits. But he is not looking back. He's got his tongue out and he's reaching out to what he thinks is security. He thinks that handrail is security. He hopes that that little foot-walking bridge is secure. But the fact is dad is there and he is secure. You know the Father is there even if we don't seem to be aware of it. We may not be aware of Him but He is very much aware of us.

I've started several of my messages recently by saying, "God has his eyes fixed on you." God is watching you. Are you watching Him? Are your eyes fixed on Him? I think it's a good question because He is watching. I think I hear you saying loudly, clearly, and effectively, that if you want peace in the valley, in life, in the midst of blessing that you need to fix your focus on him, the creator of the heavens and earth, the one that's watching over you. I have found indescribable peace.

I talked to you as we were having a little fellowship before. I live amazed. When you listen to me talking in there with Betty, did you sense that I live amazed?

Pete: I did! Very much so.

James: And did you sense that I live in a presence of amazement?

Pete: Yes.

James: Here's the thing that I wish you'd understand, all of you; this is what I know Pete wants, this is what Betty and I want. We're not like this special little couple. We're the couple -- the husband didn't have a father. My mother was raped and conceived me. Her dad wasn't the real leader, he drank a lot. She didn't know him real well but he was there. Her mother was strong. Her two sisters and her brother love God. This girl loves God.

But here we are, we're a miracle story. And we live amazed because we stepped into amazing grace and chose to walk in it. And we found this Father always anxious to pick us up, even get us out the ditch we dug, the pit we made for ourselves and got in it. He wanted to get us out of it.

So all of you who are watching, this book was written for you. This program is here for you. Listen to me. God wants to be the one who lifts you up. He's got you. Would you just lean back, say, "Hold me"? And just let him have your life, trust him -- trust him! Father, hold me. Forgive me, cleanse me. Comfort me. Don't ever let me go.

And he says, "I won't. Now just follow my lead."

You'll be blessed -- you'll be a blessing. You want someone to pray with you, the number is there.

We've written a book, I wrote it for you called *Knowing God as Father*. I'd love to send it to you. I didn't have a father. I got to know God as Father. I talk about it. And then it is a simple Bible study -- just a simple Bible study to get you started. So you may say, "I gave my life to Christ. I want God as my Father. Religion won't do, I want a relationship." You call; we'll pray with you.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Pete Wilson for writing this great book?

[Applause]

Thanks for holding your arms out to your beautiful little boy and showing us how the father is doing that for everybody. Really, he's got a unique gift. He's got blessing, not only to preach and communicate but he's got a great gift to write. Published by Thomas Nelson, one of the great publishers; they don't publish stuff that's not good. If you'd like to have the book, you just help us give some kids some food and we'll be glad to send it to you.

Pete, we love helping people. I've watched a lot of sorrow but we've healed a lot of hearts.

When I say we, I want you to get this. This is not me and Betty. It is not just the missionaries. The missionaries will tell you, "We're empty-handed. We can't be here. We can't stay here and we have nothing to offer unless people who love God enable us to literally be the arms and hands of Jesus to a hurting world. I want you to watch. Whatever you do, don't take your eyes off of this. And just listen and ask God, what do you want me to do? And just do it. Watch.

On the mission field

Announcer: Throughout God's Word, we're challenged to reach out to the least of these, to the widow, the orphan. There are few places in the world which present more opportunity to embrace that call than Africa. The one we present to you today is Monica, a broken widow whose family is losing the fight for their lives.

>> My boy was only three years old. He died from hunger.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Monica, I wish that you could -- I wish you could understand my language and I could understand yours. I hear your heart. I would like to help heal your broken heart. We cannot give back the children. I believe you'll see them some day. I know you're a woman of faith. And I know your heart's broken. And what we want to do is help you keep your children that you have now and not lose them.

I know you're concerned about everybody else's children too. So Monica, we can be an expression of love and healing for you.

And all of you who are watching, I'm asking you to be just that because if I'd been right there with her I would have let her weep on my shoulder, I would have held her and her children. I would have sat down there by the little kids like I've done so many times and hold little children in my lap. We've held some when they breathed their last breath and we just love to save them. And love saves lives and it gives life.

So during this last week of mission feeding, for this particular emphasis, I need to hear from all of you and say, "I'll help heal your heart, Monica, and your neighbor's and keep those kids for you. I'm going to give the missionaries the ability to do it."

That's what you're saying when you say okay, I'm going to go to LifeToday.org or I'm going to go online and I'm going to dial that phone number, whatever you're going to do, and I'm going to take my bankcard and use it like a check. And I'm going to give life knowing that because some friends have such a burden for people like that, they said, "We will match what you give this week, up to \$400,000."

We have 400,000 in feeding areas now the missionaries have found and they've organized them, and those groups grow because people hear there's food there and we know there are 400,000 and we know there are 25,000 there where Monica was in that area of Sudan that's just been ravaged by horrible warring factions and by famine.

So please, the missionaries are there. They're so precious, they're so beautiful; let's keep them there doing the work of God. They face persecution and danger and death. But let's don't leave them empty-handed; let's let them know we're with them. We're with the family of faith and we're with these precious people and their children.

So would you dial the number or would you go online? Take that bankcard, go to LifeToday.org and say, "Here's my gift" knowing it will be doubled. Could you give \$100? That normally will feed 10 children; for the next months now it will be 20. If you can give \$1,000, instead of feeding 100, it will be 200! Your gift of \$30 or \$50 will be doubled from three to six, from five to ten here right now. Basically, a few hours left, you might say. We need to raise all the necessary funds.

Father, I pray every person watching will give what you put on their heart and they'll do it joyfully. They will be cheerful givers; in Jesus' name.

Please go online. Will you? Will you get up and move? Reach out and embrace these precious people with love and encourage the missionaries, "We're with you." Please do it! Or dial the number. If you get a busy, be persistent and get through because you're going to be a lifeline. You're going to be an expression of God's love. Thanks for doing it. Thanks for being an answer to Monica's prayer.

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.

As an answer to prayer, a group of *LIFE*'s friends have set a \$400,000 matching gift challenge for Mission Feeding. This means your gift today can have a double impact! \$30 to help feed three children will be doubled to impact six children. \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save 10 children. \$100 for ten children will be doubled to help feed 20 children. And \$300 for 30 children will be doubled to help feed and minister to 60 children.

With your gift, we'll send you *Heirs to the Kingdom*, four powerful messages on audio CD or USB flash drive. You'll also receive the award-winning book, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*.

With your double-impact gift of \$100 or more to help feed twenty children please request *The Story*, a running narrative Bible to help you engage with God's word more easily.

And finally, please consider a double-impact gift of \$1,000 and request this beautifully framed canvas print of the "Forest Chapel" by the Painter of Light™, Thomas Kinkade.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

Peter: These are returnees who have returned back to their home area. They get one month of food from WFP through the U.N. and then they're on their own.

The problem is they came here with nothing. They didn't have cattle, they didn't have goods, they didn't have money; they lost all that in the war. Now they have got to try and reestablish but it takes six months at least to get a crop to give them the food they need.

What do they do in the meantime? There are already a huge amount of kids here who are very malnourished. What are they going to do? If we don't help them, they are in serious, serious trouble.

Please, let's get together and let's help these people just make it through this time. They really deserve your help.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I are praying with all our heart there wouldn't be a single person watching who can help who won't joyfully help. Please do.

We're sending *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*; it is a tremendous book. *Heirs to the Kingdom* to show you who we are now. If you'd like to have Pete Wilson's book, there's something that just caught your heart and your attention and you say, "I'd like to have that." We'll send it to you to say thanks. You help save these precious children, help these people, we want to say thanks because we love you.

Remember to visit stream -- the stream.org every day and really pray and get the word out. I'm telling you, by the end of this year we can have America headed in a new direction and we can see a whole secure blessed future, and we bless others as a nation that's been blessed.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Pete Wilson.

Pete, appreciate you. Love that picture of that little boy! That daddy looking over that boy! Thank you so much.

Thank you, thank you for sharing this time with us. It means a lot not only to us but to a lot of people.

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