

6/25/15
Week 26 WFL
Jim Liske and Quovadis Marshall

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! It's such a joy and pleasure for you to join with us. I'm Betty and this is James, and we have some wonderful guests!

James: Chuck Colson is a miracle story. He's one of the great real Water Gate miracles. It's the kind of miracle that just needs to be multiplied in Washington many times over; where the people who are kind of entrenched in the system really see the light -- not because they think it will get them some attention or votes but because they need wisdom that comes from above. And a very brilliant man, highly educated, very articulate communicator was -- he just had a head-on collision with the light, Jesus -- that's Chuck Colson.

After being in prison he saw prison differently. And when he was set free in his spirit he really wanted to help the prisoners. One of our guests, who was going to really tell you what they want to see related to prisoners that God wants, you should want it, Jim Liske has taken over the leadership of Prison Fellowship. He's got a prisoner here, a Mr. Marshall named Quovadis; he's a radiant person that probably in so many ways could have been a life wasted. But he is also an example of lives that seem hopeless and a revelation of the fact they don't need to be and shouldn't be.

I want you to welcome now the head of Prison Fellowship, Jim Liske and Quovadis. Would you welcome them to *LIFE Today*?

Jim: Thank you, James! Thank you, Betty.

James: I want you to cover essential ground and you can take it any direction you want to. But I don't believe... I think we've got a lot of people in prison, they're incarcerated with an imbalance in the justice, the criminal justice system, even a racial divide that needs to be corrected. So let me just ask you, do you believe we need to make some major, necessary, meaningful adjustments in the criminal justice system?

Jim: Yes, we do. Today, James and Betty, we incarcerate people that we're mad at rather than people who are actually criminals. When Chuck went, as he would say, "from the White House

to the big house," there were 230,000 individuals in prison in America. Today there are 2.3 million.

James: Ten times multiplied.

Jim: The Pew Foundation would tell us there are 2.7 million children in America with an incarcerated parent. The U.N. says that the greatest threat to American children is actually incarceration in America.

We've been asking the wrong question in America now for 40 years. We've been asking, how do we get bad people out of our neighborhood? When we ask that question it predetermines our actions. We look at some people as if they're bad. We may actually look at some people from some socioeconomic situations and declare them bad. Then when they leave our neighborhoods it is out of sight out of mind.

I would suggest that we need to ask a different question and it is the question of the gospel, it is the question of the church, how do we bring good people home? How do we understand that of that 2.3 million people behind the bars in America, the cure for cancer could be there?

Certainly the cure to what's happening in our urban core is there because we know that an individual who has been breaking the law in a neighborhood, if they come to Jesus and find redemption, they experience the Romans 8:28 story in their life, God takes all of those things that turns it into the good, what that man or woman goes home to that neighborhood and brings the message of the gospel instead of the message of drug abuse, change happens in their Jerusalem; or in a prison, when we understand that every inmate in a prison in America is created in the image of God.

We talk about human dignity. We talk about the sanctity of human life. Well, it doesn't stop at birth. And every individual behind the walls of America's prisons today is an individual Jesus died for. So what would happen if the 700,000 individuals that come back to our communities every year in America -- 700,000 individuals from the prisons will come home and stand in the line at Wal-Mart with us, what would happen if they came home knowing Jesus, knowing their purpose, having been trained in prison, and came home to change their neighborhoods, empowered by a church that was receiving them? And we actually fulfilled the instruction of Jesus to remember the prisoner, to visit the prisoner.

Some of the greatest leaders I know I've met in prison; individuals with unbelievable business minds are there in prison.

Easter weekend this year my wife and I, Kathy, were in prison in Texas in the prison where all the pregnant women go when they're sentenced. So we're there with pregnant young moms,

we're there in this medical facility where women have had mastectomies, where they're going through chemotherapy. In the midst of that there is a church, there is women within the walls who've come to Christ. There is joy. There is hope. And we talked about Easter being just like the day when those women and men in prison leave the gates of a prison. It is like the tomb being opened up and they walk out to new life when they've found Jesus and there is a church to receive them.

James: You know what's really disturbing me as you're talking about this and the fact that it should happen, it is not happening, is that we're absolutely, with that phrase, it's not even in the constitution, not in the declaration, it's not any way a part of the American way of life -- separation of church and state, to mean keep God out of anything in national life, social life, public life, in the culture, put it under the covering, a steeple in the building, shut up, stay out.

And the fact that the church has allowed themselves as witnesses to allow the gates of hell to incarcerate all of us and keep our witness from going forth to the very people who need it most. We need to have that in the church. Now we don't even want it in the military, where God has given these people direction and miraculous protection throughout history, they don't want it in the schools, they don't want it anywhere in the public -- they surely don't want it now in Washington. I believe a lot of people would like to carve all the biblical quotes and quotations and scriptures out of the stone that is written all over our capitol and the buildings in Washington.

The church has got to stop this and say we're going to be witnesses and all hell is not going to stop us, and Uncle Sam or some federal agency is not going to stop us. We've got to get to that point. There's a resolve here I'm hearing you know we need to get in.

Now here's a guy, did you have some incarceration issues, Quovadis, in your life?

Quovadis: I did. I think, James, if there is one pivot in my life, it's probably been prison. My father was in prison, and then shortly thereafter I followed. Unfortunately the stats say that 70% of all inmates have children and of those children 70% of them will end up in incarceration.

James: So sad!

Quovadis: But again, the gospel tells us God doesn't see a number, he's a person.

I think of the verse where Paul says, "Although I am in chains the gospel is not in chains." So the phenomenon, the miracle is that regardless of the church's response outside the prison walls the gospel is not changed within the prison walls and so the gospel is flourishing, the church is growing.

James: And is this because people do get in or prisoners get saved and start witnessing or a combination? What is it?

Quovadis: Yeah, I think it is a combination. We serve a big God. Concrete walls and barbed wire fences can't keep him out. He's made known his affection and has set his affection on humanity. So wherever there is a heart that cries out, he will respond. He is the great liberator. So we see the liberator liberate men. It's at the heart of the message of the gospel.

Luke four, Jesus made it very clear his intention, the culture, and the context of his kingdom. He said, "I've come to set free the prisoner." Matthew 25, the end of his life, essentially he says, "I still love prisoners and thus, the first person to inherit eternal life," as Jim likes to say, "is a prisoner."

James: So you've been in prison. When did you find the freedom and liberty it gives you, the joy and the glow in your countenance right now that is not pretense, it is not trying to put on something, it's a revelation of something going on. When did this happen to you? What happened to you?

Quovadis: For me, 17 years old, I'm from a small town in Iowa. In my apartment complex in the midst of crisis, August 23rd, 1997, I said, "God, if you're real reveal yourself to me and I'll give you my life."

The next morning a pastor knocked on my door and talked to me about Jesus. Jeremiah 33:1, he says, "If you call on me I will answer you." So that began the journey; salvation is a moment, transformation takes a lifetime.

So for me, really, the growth and development, I think of my own life, in Christ now this new life I have, happened in the context of being in prison.

James: But you went through some real trials because that pastor actually said something to you, even though he shared the gospel, this is the tragic part of the gospel. We don't just win people to Christ, we win them to a new life in Christ that requires a father's oversight through the family of faith and believers and the body of Christ revealing Christ -- no substitute for it. He actually said a terrible thing to you after he pointed you to Christ. What did he say to you?

Quovadis: You probably won't feel comfortable in our church.

James: See, that just breaks my heart -- it absolutely breaks my heart. By the way, I made a real dumb statement one time. I said, "God doesn't have a problem with races, he is color

blind." And God said, "I'm not color blind. I love color. I love a bouquet. I don't like plainness and sameness; I like diversity and distinctives." So he doesn't have an issue there. He doesn't have a tribal issue. He doesn't have a racial issue. He doesn't have a national issue. We, the people have those issues -- get rid of them and become the family of God with a great father. Okay, you got in trouble. When did the process of growth go for you?

Quovadis: So I found myself in prison as a believer but realizing I'm not in the greatest environment. So I spent the first two years really struggling as a believer in prison. My father, who happened to be in prison at the same time that I was in prison, introduced me to a man who was giving leadership to a Prison Fellowship program. So I was accepted into that program. So for 18 months I uh... it was amazing. I found a family of faith, a community of believers who loved Christ, who as Jim likes to say, we're all recovering from something, returning from somewhere.

James: All of us! All of us!

Quovadis: We all are. So I like to say that in prison I found brothers for the journey and fathers and mothers for a lifetime. So it was volunteers, men and women who looked like you, who came to see some young black kid from the streets. And what I heard was love and consistency. So the color issue didn't matter because love speaks loud and clear.

James: Glory overcomes all those divisions. What do you do now?

Quovadis: I have the privilege of working --

James: Do you just glow?

[Laughter]

Jim: He does! Yeah, he does!

Quovadis: I actually work for Prison Fellowship. I met Jim about two years ago and through a series of conversations he gave me the amazing privilege to be a part of the ministry that has given so much to me and my family.

James: You got it! Jim, tell us what you want us to know about Prison Fellowship so we pray with you and we work with you as caring believers.

Jim: Well, James and Betty, you're very accurate that the church has seemingly being pushed

out of public square. But the reality in corrections is we have more opportunities now than we've ever had before.

James: Is it a desperation that's allowed y'all to get in?

Jim: Governors, Attorney Generals, corrections people, wardens...

James: See, they have to be going against the tide, against the current though.

Jim: The Lord has a wonderful way of opening the doors. We know that when the church inside of a prison is growing, reportable incidents go down. A violent incident in a prison costs \$5800. So a warden knows if the church is growing, the prison is less violent, he saves money. Governors know that when people are in faith-based programs, they don't go back to prison as often.

At the average of \$40,000 an inmate per year, if they're not going back to prison, there are fewer victims, costs go down. So we see in this microcosm of life in America's prisons, Christianity is just the best way to do living. It is just the best way to do business.

So we have this unprecedented open door Prison Fellowship today with directors from corrections saying, "Can we please bring Jesus into the prisons?" We're training wardens, and the wardens are leading institutions at transforming individual's lives and hearts. And then churches, really, are rising up and recognizing more and more yes, we do need to receive that prisoner when they come home. We need to receive those children and that caregiver. We would love any of your listeners, pastors, and individuals to join us in this journey because it is exciting.

Betty: And maybe give them opportunities too. They need that. They need a new start.

Jim: When I was pastoring, I had a relative that went to church -- or went to prison -- sorry! -- Same difference some days.

[Laughter]

James: Similar spirits sometimes.

Jim: Some days. Really, I had to admit to my congregation for about 18 years of the pastorate, I did not pay attention to the prisoner or the prisoner's family. I had an empathetic moment of suddenly understanding that there was no different between the individual behind the walls and myself. In the same way that Jesus advocated for me, for Quovadis, for you, for all of your

listeners before the father, we have the opportunity in the church to advocate for the prisoner. When that happens, the church enlivens, the spirit brings a new breath and a new freshness to the church. We'd love to have your listeners partner with us in that.

James: If they want to know how they can, web site that they can go to where you could direct them?

Jim: PrisonFellowship.org. There you'll find everything you need to volunteer in a prison, to volunteer to find training as a church, as a mentor, to care for the children of the inmates. If you just go to PrisonFellowship.org we'd be glad to partner with you and help your ministry because that effective.

James: Then if they want to go to the prisons, would there be opportunity for you to learn when they could go, when they could go with someone who would help show them the ropes, so to speak, how they can be better involved, how they can say be a consistent follow-up to what Prison Fellowship does when you go in, how they could stay there in their community?

Jim: We have all that training available, either online or we'd come to your church and do that training for you because we want local churches caring for local areas. So your jail, your prison, that -- you're building a relationship inside the walls so when those individuals come home they come home to family and they come home to friends. Your zip code should not determine the sentence you get or the education you get or the opportunities you have in America.

I think the church needs to stand up together. This issue of criminal justice reform could be the thing that could help us find racial unity in the church because it relates to all of us in every community.

James: Absolutely! And it benefits all of us to get it corrected. It really does.

Father, Lord, you are giving us a clear foundation stone to stand on together. Lord, these are just undeniable principles, the father principles, the need for it and you are the ultimate father expressing yourself through your family. So God, bring us together to really impact this darkness with the glory of your light and the illumination of the way; in Jesus' name.

Thank you both! Would you tell these men thank you for their availability to God?

[Applause]

-- And their vision. There is the Prison Fellowship web site again. Go there and find a way to set captives free. I just thank God for what you're doing.

Our viewers love helping people. That's why I know there will be people connecting, trying to find out how they can help you. But we don't do anything... I can pick up a clean, fresh drink of water -- you may think this is strange but every time I turn on a tap I thank God. I just thank God for the advances we've made in this world. We don't have a challenge people created in the image of God can't meet and we meet it with wisdom and love, effectively.

What we're doing right now that's as great a miracle to people who watch us as anything we do is we give people fresh water where they never had it and where they're dying because of contaminated water. I want you to listen to the heart of God expressed through one of our friends. Then I want you to be a vital part of a miracle, an undeniable perfect cure, perfect answer, miracle.

Watch! I think you're going to be very excited.

On the mission field

Tammy: This is absolutely horrible -- to think that this is his only source of water. I've watched child after child come in this little pool of water and dip their precious little cup and drink this water. It is horrific!

My heart aches to know that they struggle every single day to survive but they have nothing else that they can do. This is it! This is their only source of water so if they don't even dip in to take a drink of this, they won't survive.

This water brings death but we are on a mission to bring life and not just a quick fix but something that will change this community for generations to come. We can change this for them. We can come in here with a drill. We can drill them a water well. Won't you partner with me today? Together, I believe that we can make a huge impact into this community -- together we can make the difference!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Father, I thank you for Tammy and I thank you for the missionary relief workers and the ones who run the drilling rigs. Please God, give us the resources to keep sharing life; in Jesus' name. I'm asking you to partner, I believe with God and his heart, with the Lord Jesus. "Give a cup of water in my name," Jesus said, "you won't lose your reward." I've said it many times. If you look for a reward beyond the blessing you can be to others as reward enough I think you'll always have a little bit of a distorted perspective. It's more blessed to give than to

receive. So if we could give and give to give not to get, but give to release the river of love and life, I think it is so enriching and fulfilling.

Betty, when I see those precious people and children going to that filthy water -- and there's a pig right in the middle of it, you really don't want the pig to drink it -- yet the people are drinking it taking in disease, and many of them die and losing their children. But we have the perfect solution and it's just to give them a clean water well.

Betty: It is, James. The thing that's so beautiful to me, when you realize it, the gift that you give today is not just a short-term gift; it is a lasting gift because that water well is going to be there to continually give them clean water to drink, to keep these precious children from ever getting sick from that old diseased water. Because I promise you, you give them a choice, they're going for the clean water. They're waiting for it.

So let's please join together and let's do this. Let's drill those water wells so that they can have something they can have hope in and know that somebody is praying and caring about them.

James: In advanced countries like the United States and Canada and the United Kingdom and Australia and many places, everyone wants to feel good, have fun. We try every way to find it and so many people still remain empty. They just want to feel good. They just want a chance to live; and when you love them and in love you give them a way to feel loved and better, they're going to listen to the greatest love story ever told. We give them Water for Life and we introduce them to the water of life and they're ready to hear it. That's why when we save millions of lives we win even more millions to Christ in those outreaches.

So would you please today go online, LifeToday.org and take your bankcard and use it like a check or just dial the number right there. Many people are calling for prayer because their hearts are broken and that prayer number is paid for by love, somebody like you. But today, would you dial the number or go online? Take your bankcard and say, "I'm going to help drill a well." The wells cost \$4800. Could you give one?

Many people say it's the greatest joy of the entire year to do it. Small businesses do it. Couples do it. Churches do it. But most of all, individuals do it. Could you?

Wait a minute. Most of the wells are drilled by people making \$48 gifts and it's multiplied. \$48 just to break it down gives ten people basically water the rest of their life; \$144, 30 people. We have many friends who give \$1200 and pray, God, help three more join me or \$2400 and pray one joins -- we've got a well. At whatever level you can participate, do it please. LifeToday.org, take your bankcard, do it, you literally can release a well of water -- love expression right now today or you can dial the number. Would you do it?

We have some gifts for you, a daily devotional that is going to bless you. I know it will. It is amazing. It's literally broken out seasonally, where you can see the seasons of the year, and every day. It is a journal there where you read the word, you get an inspirational devotional, and then you journal. We want to help you grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

We have some beautiful "Names of Jesus" pens that people have told us over and over, "Please, send us those again. We want to share them with somebody else, and they become a great testimony every time we take them out." So we're sending them.

Also, the Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel" to say thank you.

Would you make that gift now? 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 "Every Day a New Day" devotional broken out into the four seasons of the year. This daily devotional features scriptures, inspirational thoughts, a Bible reading plan, and a place for you to journal each day.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request "The Names of Jesus" pen set; one inscribed with the names of Jesus found in scripture and the other reflecting the gifts of the spirit.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well.

And request this beautifully framed canvas print of "The Forest Chapel" by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, you know, here's a little girl getting a drink. Betty just said, "I can't help her -- I can't help her do it." The reason Betty says that is she knows, she's seen the river where it comes from, we've seen the animals and the animal waste and we know it is contaminated. How are you going to tell a thirsty child they can't have water? Her mother brought them the water. Mom brought them this water. Mom had no idea she might be bringing this child disease and sickness.

Betty: This is the kind of water they're drinking, the only water that they have to fill their thirst. But as they're filling their thirst they're putting disease into their little bodies. We don't need that to happen. We can make a difference in that if you'll just join with us and let's give these children some clean safe water. Will you please go to the phone right now? We need to begin drilling these water wells to help these children. We must not delay. We need your help now. Please go to the phone!

In the studio:

James: It's such a blessing to be able to bless others -- just the blessing of blessing. And to be able to send you "Every Day a New Day" devotional, I'm telling you, I love the way they've broken it out seasonally. What this is an inspirational word and scripture passage and then a place for you to journal your thoughts. It won't take a lot of time but it is just sitting at the feet of Jesus.

The "Names of Jesus" pens that people tell us, "Give these away again. We want some more. We ran out of ink!" I'll tell you what. We'll keep you in the ink if we can just keep some kids and their families with clean water. Thank you for doing that.

Join Betty and me in saying to Jim Liske, Prison Fellowship, and Quovadis how much we appreciate you. Y'all are a blessing. We love you and appreciate you.

God, thank you for Chuck Colson! And his memory and testimony lives on. Thank you for being a witness for Christ. Thanks for sharing *LIFE Today*.

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