

7/9/15
Week 28 WFL
Danielle Strickland

James: Thank you! You make us feel very, very welcome. We appreciate it. I'm James Robison; Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

We've got a Canadian friend here that is -- well, the title of the book, *A Beautiful Mess*. She is a very pretty, pretty girl. We're going to find out what she meant by beautiful mess. Her name is Danielle Strickland. I'm real excited about you meeting her and hearing her story because she shares a lot of the concerns that we share, I know definitely the Lord has on his heart.

I want to remind you of something: Stream.org. Go there every day. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God. The river now that feeds those tributaries are people that have been called by God, set apart by God as a tributary of wisdom and life and truth that transforms hearts and minds. That's what the stream is doing. It is a place you go every day. It is updated 24 hours a day with the news that matters to people who care, especially Christians and people who pray and know we need a miracle -- nationally, personally -- stream.org.

Danielle is part of the Salvation Army, which is truly still one of the great charities and outreaches in the world. Her journey and her story is really interesting. I want you to welcome her. I'm anxious for us to hear how in the world she ever came up with the title like *Beautiful Mess*.

Here's Danielle. Would you welcome her?

Danielle, good to see you. How is everything in Canada?

Danielle: Everything in Canada is fantastic.

James: We have so many friends there. I say to all of our Canadian viewers, thank you for being family! Thank you. I've often said if you'll just get the fullness of the anointing of God on you it can spill down on us. Some of you know, you'd really like to help us. You probably think America is a beautiful mess and maybe not so beautiful sometimes. But we love you. Betty and I want to thank you for loving us and helping us in the outreaches. Keep it up! I'm glad God is blessing you.

And you're from Alberta, and Edmonton where I held a crusade.

Danielle: I live in Edmonton, Alberta.

James: I want you to tell me about this, *Beautiful Mess*. What in the world are you implying here?

Danielle: Well, look, I'm going to tell you that there's a mess everywhere. I don't have to spell that out -- and there is chaos in our world at epidemic proportions. The fastest growing human crime on the planet right now just climbing and climbing: Human trafficking. The sex industry, porn industry, everywhere you look it's a bit of a mess.

I think one of the things that happens is, I don't know how this happens but I feel like people of faith, Christian people have been taught somehow along the way that wherever there is chaos you should stay away from it. And that somehow, the best thing that you can do is when there is a mess about is actually to step back, avoid it, deny it, don't touch it. Whatever you do don't go near it -- whether it's a personal mess or whether it's like societal mess. And you find this happening. When Christians do that, even personally, someone who struggles maybe with depression or a mental illness or there is an addiction in the family, sort of like cover, deny, don't touch, push it away, don't tell anybody whatever you do. Just do your part, look good, pretend like you're doing okay even when you're not because we have this kind of lie that we've been taught that that chaos is actually the enemy.

I believe that actually God has always been from the very beginning, Genesis, creating beautiful things out of chaotic places. It is actually his best work; so those very places that we're afraid of, the dark places; so whether it is a neighborhood and it's a bad neighborhood.

My tradition in the Salvation Army, the founder, William Booth used to tell people the strategy for advancing the church in the Salvation Army was to find the darkest place you could and start there. He said when you're actually going to do the message of salvation you find the worst possible person -- like the one that could not get saved by any human measure and you start there. Because I think he understood this principle that God actually hovers -- in Genesis it says that -- wherever there is this chaos, there is this void, there is this dark, scary, kind of foreboding place called chaos in Hebrew, it says the Spirit of God hovered over it, was near in it and began to actually speak out of that place, he began to speak light and a strategy of a new creation. That's what made this beautiful world. You don't have to go far to see beauty either.

So I think rather than avoid those dark spots I think we need to go right into them. I think we need to go into those places with honesty, with humility, with an acknowledgment that actually

we can't do this but with the idea and with the understanding, with the faith to believe that God is near to us in that place and that he is going to show us a way, begin to recreate for us a way out.

James: Well, you tell in your own story with *Beautiful Mess*, something about what you actually considered a mess that you made. Tell us a little bit about your own personal journey before you got to the place that you now seem to be able to see much more clearly and with greater reason and understanding. Tell us about your own journey.

Danielle: Absolutely! I have always been super gifted at creating a mess.

[Laughter]

It's like a special gift my mom said I had. I really was. I grew up and my parents are in the Salvation Army, were Christian leaders. I really believed the lie of the enemy that Christianity was boring and confining and irrelevant. I was not interested in boring, and I was not interested in confining, and I believed a lie from the enemy that rebellion meant freedom. So I went for it in all directions.

That rebellion, instead of leading me to freedom led me to slavery, internal slavery, brokenness, deadness, and eventually, led me actually to jail -- to literal slavery where my life was confined to the smallest of places. When I was in that jail I really believed God was mad at me. I'd made a mess out of the inside of my life and the inside of my life. I was pretty hardened, I was pretty dead and I was drug addicted and I was alone.

There was a Salvation Army lady, an officer who came to visit me all the time. She never gave up on me. I was estranged from my parents; I hit the streets, I left the church, I left them. But she just kept coming. I don't know how they get in sometimes, the Salvation Army, to these places but they've got -- they have S's on their uniform, I always call it super suits or something. They have friends in low places, I suppose. She came into the jail cell in downtown Toronto, a holding cell, she got in there. I was alone in the jail cell. She came right towards me. She wrapped her arms around me. She whispered in my ear, "I love you."

When I saw her coming I thought for sure oh, great! Here comes the lecture. Right? And she just wraps her arms around me and said she loved me. I didn't hug her back. I was dead. As a matter of fact, when she left the cell I cried out after her, "You didn't even bring me a smoke?" She left the cell probably convinced that that was a useless visit.

As soon as she left the cell I was alone and I remember having this epiphany, this vision, Jesus came to my cell. Of course, I thought God was mad at me. Jesus came into the cell, he wrapped

his arms around me and he said the same thing, "I love you." I describe it as though light turned on. I literally came to myself. I remember actually thinking to myself, wow! I'm in jail. I probably didn't say wow. But I'll edit it for your show. And light came, which of course we know is the first thing God creates; isn't it? -- Out of chaos is light. I saw what was actually really happening for the first time and I could see. I didn't surrender my life to Jesus at that point because I still thought you had to be good to be a Christian, and I wasn't very good at being good.

I thought, I'll try to do this. I'll try to clean up my life, which of course, no one can clean up your own life without God. It is impossible. It is like trying to take a shower without any water. It does a couple of things: It hurts, and also, it just doesn't work -- you don't get clean. Eventually I surrendered my life to Jesus and he began to make out of this chaotic, dark, void places, even still some of those places inside of me he uses that very material to actually make a new creation, which is like recycled but even more beautiful than it's ever been before. It can speak to people; it can help people.

James: Then you got really right with God.

Danielle: Yeah! And I've seen it over and over again. So people that the world gives up on or people who say, "It is too late." "It's too hard." Or people who just say like, "Whoo! I'm not going near that." I'm always like, "Let's go right to it!"

Can't you see the spirit of the Lord hovering over that place -- that dark place?" And there are some dark places right now for this generation. And instead of running and hiding, we need to actually get to the place where we're going with God and we're hovering in those places saying, "Okay, God, show us the way. Show us some light. Bring us some creation here."

Betty: Don't you feel like he let you see his unconditional love through that woman?

Danielle: Like a force. The unconditional love of God is the most powerful weapon in the world; isn't it? -- Just like a force!

James: When you got out of jail were you on a new force when you came out? You knew something was different? You were going to head a new way or what was going on there?

Danielle: Well, I got out of jail, kind of miraculously, and the Lord had a plan for sure. My mother said I never changed speeds, I just changed direction.

[Laughter]

So I just went as fast as I was going except I went the other way. But I got out of jail, I went to detox, I went to treatment. I went on a mission trip to Africa right away. I had to get special permission from my probation officer to leave the country and go to Africa as a juvenile delinquent.

And when I was in Africa I feel like Africa disciplined me, really. A miraculous thing happened to me which saved my life forever and changed everything for me when I was there. I realized the world was bigger than me. I realized the world... and God saved me from narcissistic western ideas where everything, even my Christianity is not about me; that actually, this thing that God was doing in me was about something bigger than me. When I got that, when I realized that I could give my life for something larger than myself it changed everything.

James: You work with the Salvation Army now. What would you say your major role is with them? What is your assignment there?

Danielle: My assignment with the Salvation Army is I'm just appointed to a brand new position as a Social Justice Director in Los Angeles for western United States.

James: See, Canadians are coming down. The anointing is coming.

[Laughter]

Danielle: Somebody has got to help.

[Laughter]

James: We need it! Don't stop praying for us!

Danielle: I went to stream.org and I saw the way.

[Laughter]

James: There you go! I told you that's it! You have great wisdom. So you're there but you also are doing something and I want you to give us a web address because we are, our viewers, when I say "we," it's a big we, it's the people who watch *LIFE Today* who understand the importance of sharing life today and every day.

We've tried to rescue people from the sex trafficking and the horrible bondage of it. It's absolute slavery. It's indescribable. You're involved in that. Tell us how you are, what you call it. I want a web site in case people would want to in some way be involved with you or support you.

Danielle: There are a couple of different things I'm involved with locally. It's called SACrossroads.com. It is a local inner city work in Edmonton where we're out every night on the street offering women a way out. We go into brothels and massage parlors and visit people in the indoor sex industry trying to welcome them out of that place.

There is another group called Stop The Traffic which I help lead; I've led the Canadian chapter of that. It's a global campaign against human trafficking. I think when history shines its light on this generation my grandkids are going to say, "What did you do? What did you do about this? This is the greatest evil we've ever seen." There are more slaves in the world today than in all the transatlantic slave trade history together. I mean it is 27 million estimated slaves right now. I think someone has got to do something about it.

If ever I heard the words of Jesus when he said, "I've come because the Spirit of God is upon to proclaim good news to the poor and freedom to the prisoners," surely he meant this.

James: He meant bondage. He didn't literally mean jail cells he meant bondage, being held captive.

Betty: How were you received when you go into these different places?

Danielle: The whole brothel ministry, the chaplaincy thing was created in Australia; I lived there for three years. It's a legalized prostitution system there for 17 years so it's like you have your 7-Eleven and then you have your brothel. And you have your neighborhood brothel kind of thing.

A 72-year-old retired Baptist lady phoned me up one day because her phone number was two digits different from her local brothels. So she kept getting some calls. She said, "It was disturbing me." So she said, "I decided I'm going to change my number." She said, "On the morning I was going to the telephone company to change my number," she said, "the Holy Spirit interrupted me."

I said, "How rude!"

[Laughter]

That's how you can tell the Holy Spirit is a woman; right? She is always interrupting.

So the Holy Spirit said, "What are you doing? Why are you changing your number?"

She said, "Well, I keep getting those calls."

The Holy Spirit said, "Maybe you keep getting those calls because I want you to do something about it."

So she had coffee with me. She said, "What should I do?"

Oh... Inside -- I didn't say it outside because I had my Salvation Army suit on so you have to pretend like you know what you're doing. But on the inside I was like I don't know. So I said to her, "What would you just normally do? What would you just naturally do if your neighbor was in a car accident, if someone moved into your neighborhood that you didn't know?"

She said, "Oh, that's easy." She said, "I'd bake some cupcakes and I'd go introduce myself."

I said, "Let's do it Tuesday."

She said, "Do what?"

I said, "Well, you're going to have to bake the cupcakes because I can't cook and then we'll go and introduce ourselves."

She said, "That's the strategy?"

I said, "Yeah. That's the official policy. That's how we do it."

[Laughter]

So we got there and actually, she went, and I'll never forget, I was praying for her. She said, "The Holy Spirit spoke to me while I was baking these cupcakes." We were praying all weekend long. You know if you're not praying you're probably not doing ministry right because if you're doing ministry right you need to pray; right? So our prayer levels just went up the roof. We all fasted, prayed -- tasted cupcakes.

[Laughter]

Anything for Jesus; right? So we were walking down the street towards the brothel and I'm just praying, "Please God, don't let her die!" Just like, "Please!"

And we're walking down the street and she said, "I think I'm supposed to do this."

I said to her, "But hey! I'm the professional."

She looked at me and said, "Yeah, but I'm the neighbor." She walked up to the brothel door, Asian run brothel, and knocks on this door shaking like a leaf; 72 year old, retired, never done anything like this in her life.

And the Asian manager came to the door, of course, because she is not the normal clientele and says, "Can I help you?"

She's just so nervous she went, "I brought some cupcakes!" [Laughing]

And I can still see in my mind and in my spirit, I can see like this cosmic, demonic, superpower of sexual exploitation go, "No! Not the cupcake!"

Because the guy was just like, "Oh, cupcakes! Come on in!"

And she went back to the back room and met everybody and got their birthdays and said, "Hey, I live down the road. I know I've never been but I want to say that I'm your neighbor and I like you. Here, have a gift."

She goes every week ever since. I ran back to headquarters. I phoned 10 of my Salvation Army friends. I said, "Quick! We've got to get organized. The Baptists are going to beat us to the brothels!"

[Laughter]

They said, "Well, how are you going to do it?" I said, "Cupcakes! Anyone bake? Who bakes? Someone has got to bake." And we just literally, they visit over 70 brothels every week in seven different languages now. They meet with the Australian federal police. They've busted several human trafficking rings by a 72-year-old Baptist lady not being scared of the dark.

James: Thank you, God! Thank you, God! Amen!

Listen! We would love to send you this book. Do you tell in here some of the things that God has shown you to do? Like this story? This is a New Testament story. This is the book of Acts stuff. It really is.

You told it so well. I just pray you'll continue.

If people want to know how you could help them, a web site for you or is there one that they should go to if they want to know how to get a little insight along the line you were just talking?

Danielle: There is, DanielleStrickland.com. And I write a blog on there and stuff too if you're looking for more thoughts and stories that are coming out of the grassroots.

James: And if people want to support what you're doing would they support Salvation Army or do you have some kind of a separate entity that's doing this?

Danielle: Yep. There's a bunch of different things on that web site you can go to.

James: So you know when we talk to you we appreciate all of your support. We want to inspire you to support what God puts on your heart, and so many of those things could be far beyond what we do. You feel free to go there and you look.

Isn't this wonderful, the testimony? Don't you really appreciate how alive this story was? How it's full of the spirit of the living God. I just praise the Lord for it. Our viewers have told us that there's perhaps nothing they get more joy out of than just literally giving people water. If you just give a cup of water in my name, reward. What reward? To me it is reward enough when you know you've saved a life and you've given people hope and a future.

I want you to watch this, and just see if you don't think that you're going to want to do something about what you see and what you hear -- not just with your ears but in your spirit. Watch. Hear. Heed!

On the mission field

Tammy: To think that this is her only option -- for water. As far as she knows this is her water for life. I can't even imagine swimming, bathing in this water. I would be so afraid that I'd get sick, let alone drinking this very water. This is not real water. This is not water for life.

Open captions: The only water we have is from that pond. You can see the water is brown. I feel sorry for my children. Other people can have so many things for their children but I cannot afford to feed them or give them clean water. I had five children, two baby girls and three boys. The twin girls were eight months old when they died three years ago. My son died a year ago when he was only one year old. I was working far away and I could not give them my milk. Now, I only have this baby boy and a four year old boy.

Tammy: Gosh, it would be amazing if one day we were walking together and I was carrying clean water for you in a bucket. That would be my hope and my prayer. One day! There is

hope!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty, how do you feel when you listen to Tammy and you listen to that precious mother?

Betty: That mother is grieving so much in the loss of three children already, two left. And she is so afraid she is going to lose her other children because she has no choice but to give them that filthy diseased water.

But you know there is hope. There is hope because we have found this situation and we know what to do about it -- and that's drill the water wells. We can give this precious mother hope for her other two children if we will join together and let's make the difference -- let's give them hope. Let's show them hope.

James: Right there in that same area we got to see, not exactly there but not far, we got to see our grandson and his beautiful wife of one year, they had their one year anniversary there, we got to see them rejoicing as a well hit water and the water came up. You could see the joy on all the faces of the people.

And Tammy said as she was walking with that filthy water and that bucket where she had thrown that water out, how much it would mean to her to be able to walk with a clean bucket of water. Well, we can be the answer to that hope that she expressed. We can be an answer to the anguish and prayer and concern and request of that mother. We can give them a well. Would you help us?

Now think about this. We found 500 places like that that we know this year in 12 different countries, because the missionaries have shown us the situation and the possibility. And in nearly every instance we know there's water accessible. The cost of the well, and it is an average, it varies on depth, but the average through the year for the 500 is \$4800. One reason it is that inexpensive is you, the viewers, over the years, you paid for drilling rigs that were as high as a half million dollars. But those rigs now are able to go in and get several of them working, the water in 500 areas, if we will give them the resource to do it, the \$4800 per well.

Could you give a well? If you can, I believe you will. Could you give part of a well, \$1200 and pray, three join me, Lord, and we'll have a well? -- Or \$2400 and pray one joins you. Most of the wells are given by people giving \$48. That \$48, when you break it out, will give ten people

water the rest of their life; that's how it breaks out. So that gift just keeps giving. Whatever you can do, we're asking you to do it.

We have some gifts: a wonderful devotional book for every day of the year based on seasons, beautiful "Names of Jesus" pens and the Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel" -- it's beautiful! So would you please make the gift God puts on your heart? And let's drill those 500 wells one at a time, one gift at a time.

Go online, LifeToday.org. Would you do it? Just move there now. Or you can dial the number, take your bankcard, either way, use that bankcard like a check. Always use it like a check; that's how we use them. But make the best gift you can and give life, in the name of love. Would you do that please? Right now, LifeToday.org or dial the number.

If you ever get a busy, you be determined and you get through. Say, "I'm going to give a cup of water. I'm going to give a well. I'm going to help." Please do it and thank 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 "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: I want you to get Every Day a New Day, whatever gift -- the "Names of Jesus" pens.

If you'd like to have, after hearing Danielle's testimony, what a book of Acts testimony we just heard from this beautiful Canadian who is now a missionary to the west coast. You have been sent to a very challenging place out there in the city of angels because there are some angels out there that aren't so angelic you're going to deal with. If you'd like to have her book we'll be happy to send it to you.

Would you tell Danielle again thanks and thanks to God?

You're a real blessing, Danielle. Bless you.

Thank all of you so much for your help. Stream.org every day -- stream.org. Let's get understanding of the times so we can correct the course.

Announcer: Stay connected with *LIFE Today* through your favorite social media sites or visit LifeToday.org where LIFE is always on.