

8/3/15
Week 32 WFL
Charlotte Gambill
Book: *The Miracle in the Middle*

Betty: Thanks so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. You're really going to be blessed. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: And we're so glad to have Charlotte Gambill with us from over there in the great land of the U.K. The thing is Life Church; I kind of like the name of that. She is a great author; she is a great speaker and a communicator of God's truth and his love. She's really got a special gift. I think they send her over here to do missionary work in the states and we actually try to convince her how she is desperately needed there in the United Kingdom. I really just thank God for her.

I want you to give her a real good U.S. welcome, would you, to Charlotte Gambill?

Charlotte, good to see you! We're always glad to have you. When you visit the states, you always feel free to come see us. I want to really cut to the chase about the book, *The Miracle in the Middle*. This is not a weight loss deal.

Charlotte: No, thank you. I'm not talking about that.

James: What are we talking about here?

Charlotte: I guess the book was written a little bit from a frustration in me because I saw too many of my friends and people that I did life with get stuck in this area that I've called "the middle." In any area of our life, whether it is our marriage, whether it is raising our kids, just going through seasons with your business, there is the beginning where everybody is excited. When you first get married its like oh, he's Prince Charming and he can do no wrong. You say all your vows. Well, there's a reason you say them in the beginning.

[Laughter]

Because there's a middle coming and the middle is where sometimes Prince Charming looks like Shrek. It's not like it was back then. There's a middle in the business when it is not as

exciting as you thought it was going to be or maybe more failures come to you than success. Or the middle with the children where you feel like I didn't think it would turn out this way.

I just saw so many people in that middle point begin to doubt God, begin to question their direction, and many people just give up and kind of say, "It is what it is. I'm not going to try anymore."

I really wanted to write a book to say hey, there's language for the middle. There is a message in the middle; that actually God wants you to keep going in the middle. And actually, I believe some of our greatest miracles await us in the middle.

James: Can you give us some illustrations because I feel like I identify in the sense that there have been times when I've talked about the birth of a dream or the birth of a vision and then what seems to be the death, the difficulty in the vision to where you almost doubt, if in fact it was a vision that you were excited about and where did it come from? I hallucinated or I just had some vain imagination or did it really come from God? I think there are those challenging times. So I'm assuming that this is similar to what you're referencing.

Charlotte: Absolutely. We all have them. I think anyone in the audience, anyone watching today, they would be able to relate to a middle that they're going through. The truth is if you're not in the middle right now you're probably heading towards one. Sorry for that good news.

[Laughter]

So you know we all go through them. They look different for everybody. I wrote this book really inspired by the disciples. In Mark six, verse 43 there is a very interesting account where Jesus...

James: Mock six, is that Mark six? Same as Mark.

Charlotte: The way you properly would say it is Mock six. Yeah! Yeah! See, the good thing about me is I married an American so I'm bilingual.

[Laughter]

James: I appreciate it. I wanted to be sure that we had it right. I could just see people trying to find Mock all the way through. All right, Mark six.

Charlotte: And in Mark six Jesus has just finished doing an incredible miracle. He's just fed

thousands on the shore and he turns to his disciples and he says, "I want you to get in the boat and I want you to go to Bethsaida, and I'll meet you there."

I found that so often in life we don't want to leave the shore of the spectacular. We want to stay where we felt the goose bumps and it was awesome and we had those feelings. But Jesus says to those willing to follow him like the disciples had promised and committed, "Actually, this part, I want you to get in your boat and row."

Well, they knew what a boat was. They knew how to row, they were fishermen but we don't like to following in the familiar. The middle often happens in the routine of life, the ordinary of life. It's not spectacular; it is doing the laundry, it is working at the marriage, it is paying the bills, it's the routine that kicks in in the middle where we don't feel God like we felt him back on the shore.

So they get in the boat and the Bible actually records in that scripture, they were in the middle of the lake. I love how he tells us where they were because I think the enemy knows something about the middle. He knows you're far enough away from the shore where you last felt that sense of presence, you're not yet where he told you to go, you're not at Bethsaida yet where he said he'll meet you; he knows you're vulnerable in the middle.

So in the middle is where the storm begins, in the middle is where the wind picks up, in the middle is where the struggle kicks in. So the disciples, who knew Jesus better than most, who had just been with him moments earlier begin to freak out in the middle!

The Bible says that Jesus sees them straining at the oars. And then it says this: And he was about to pass them by.

I'm like, what's that? He wasn't even going to stop? He wasn't even going to show compassion?

You know what I think? I think the middle is where God says I need you to be mature. Because Jesus had said, "I'm going to meet you in Bethsaida" and Jesus knew I'm good to my word. I'm going to see you in Bethsaida. You're not going to sink. I didn't say go to the middle and sink, you'll never make it. I said, "I'll meet you there." I think in the middle is where we have to actually test what's in the middle of us. Do I really believe that God is my healer? Do I really believe that this vision was from God? Do I really believe that I'm committed and I'm going to stay planted? I think the middle tests what's in the middle of you. And that's what was happening for those disciples.

But back to the middle they had a miracle because in the middle Jesus did show up but not like they'd seen him before. Everybody knew Jesus on the shore. Everybody knew Jesus with sand under his sandals. But in the middle that's when you see the Jesus that walks on water and that is a revelation that no one can ever take from you; that you see an aspect of Jesus in your middle moments that you know that you know that you know, okay, God, now I get it. Now I know.

I just pray by writing this book that people would hang on in their middle to get that revelation that will take them to the next side.

Betty: Some of the best part can be in the middle because we are completely hanging on to him and waiting for him to show us the next step. So many times we want to hurry to the other side -- and to miss all of the neat and wonderful things that God has to teach us? They may not seem so wonderful sometimes but those lessons, such value to our lives and if we miss that, then we miss completely what God is trying to show us.

James: I think he was walking on the things that troubled him. So he's able to overcome and I believe lead us to where we can overcome if we'll just trust the one who is able to calm the storms and walk on the water. But I actually think those testing times are strengthening. I think it is like the clay being shaped by God, there is pressure but it is purposeful pressure and it can shape us into Christ-likeness but those are not comfortable moments.

I've asked the Lord many times. I say, "I know you're honing me up."

I felt like a lot of times the Lord has to use one of those jackhammers on me to knock rough edges off. I've gotten to where I cry, 'Please God, can you use a little buffing paper -- fine sandpaper on me?' I think the more yielded we are, the more easily we're able to be shaped.

Another thing that I've passed on to people a lot of times when you think about pressure shaping us, is that if you feel pressure, that pressure is normally to move something. I feel like if you understand the pressure and a person committed to God, if you say, "Lord, I'm really giving you my life. I put my life in your hand. I want your will." That the pressure is either coming from his fingers to shape us or even if it is coming from the enemy, it is being filtered through his fingers so that it can still accomplish a heavenly purpose, a kingdom purpose.

We've got to understand that if we really are submitted to God, however difficult it gets in the middle, in the journey, it's still going to work out for his glory. All things, even things that do not seem to be good or work together by God for good to those who love him and realize we're called according to his kingdom purpose. If people would realize we've been left here, not like left alone, we've been left here by divine design and on a design assignment. And we're here to

be his witnesses even in the storm; and we're going to have the storms that's why we've got to build on a rock. You're going to have those difficult times of holding on.

I guess I just hear you saying to people those times are going to be there but you don't really even have to dread them, you have to understand them, and know that he is going to walk you through it for purpose.

Charlotte: I think one of the great sadnesses is when we try and bypass the middle or sometimes we'll pray prayers like, "God, if you could just zap me out of the middle. If you could just take me out of it, deliver." But I've always discovered with God that God will always take seed from every sorrow and he will plant it in your tomorrow. That's what he wants to do. There is a sorrow but there is a seed inside it, but you'll never get the seed out of it if you rush past your middle.

I think it's our job as believers, it's our job as the church to extract the seed that nobody else extracts, and to take it and plant it in a tomorrow that will flourish in someone else's life. The middle you went through in your marriage, if you take the seed out of that struggle, you can plant it in your neighbor's marriage who is struggling and say, "Hey, look what we learned in our middle. Look what I learned when I persevered with my business." I think that's our gift.

I want to put language around a time and a period in all of our journeys that people sometimes avoid talking about; kind of it doesn't fit the cliché of what Christians should go through so we say, "Well, it didn't happen to me" or "Thank God I'm through it." But I want to say no, what did you learn in it? I love when Jesus came to them and he saw that they were freaking out, the disciples, in the middle.

He said three things -- just three things! He said, "Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid."

I think in the middle you don't need a lot, that's enough. Whoever is watching today, if they're going through a middle, I think God is saying the same, take courage because it is a choice. You can take fear or you can take courage. Take courage! It is I. This is not promises based on what man said, it is what I said, it is my word you're standing on. And don't let fear take you down. Don't let doubt drown you.

I just love that it was the simplicity of what he said and yet it was everything that he needed to say.

James: How about a personal experience perhaps that you talk about in the book; something you went through where you really struggled in the middle? Can you give us some idea of what you have experienced?

Charlotte: I've had many. I think if you've been around leadership or any form of responsibility you face many disappointments, you face many things where you felt, God, I would be here now but I'm over here.

But personally, for me, one of my big ones was that my husband and I were told we would never have children. For us, we went through five years of a middle of infertility treatment and one failed attempt to be pregnant after another. In that was a lot of heartache. I was like, God, I'm one of the good girls. I serve you. I love you. You owe me a favor, Lord.

[Laughter]

Those prayers like they really don't make sense but I was like hey, I'm feeling it so I'm just letting you know. It didn't happen -- it didn't happen with the first prayer, it didn't happen with the second prayer. And that was a middle, it was a long middle. That's the thing, middles can be five hours, they can be five years.

In that middle, honestly, I found out what was in the middle of me. I found out as a preacher whether I believe what I preached. I found out as a believer whether I believed what I said I believed. I found out as a worshipper whether my worship was actually based on a truth that was deep on the inside of me or I was just singing words that somebody had written. I found out in my prayer life, was I a warrior or was I just a worrier? I found out whether I was a woman of faith or whether I was just someone that just knew people of faith. In the middle, really, you do find what's in the middle of you.

I would never swap it. It was hard, it was difficult, but that sorrow that we went through that eventually turned to joy because now we have two children and two miracle kids has become so many other people's testimony for their strength in their middle. The seed from my sorrow is now somebody else's tomorrow seed of hope. That's why we can't afford to bypass these moments because they're our gift to one another. You know you give your gift of your story to those that are believing for vision from God, I can give that journey and story to someone that's believing for children. When we all talk about our middles, I tell you there is more miracles than we sometimes realize.

James: We couldn't have a second child. Betty had a condition called endometriosis that a lot of women do have. The doctor told her that it would be virtually impossible to have another child. So what did you do in the middle?

Betty: First of all, I had a little anger toward God at first. I went through all those frustrated feelings and our friends were having other children and I thought, why not me, God? I'm a

good mother. I'll be a good mother to another child. But I had to come to that point where I had to trust God in what he was doing in my heart and in my life. I said, "Okay, God, I give this to you. This is yours. I'm happy with the beautiful daughter you gave us, and my husband that loves me so much. Maybe there are other children out there that I could be a mother to."

God showed me in prayer that he wanted us to adopt and we adopted our son. And our son has given us four beautiful grandchildren, and the life of he and his wife together has just been beautiful to watch. So we must not get in a hurry and get ahead of God.

Charlotte: He was your miracle in the middle and you were his miracle.

Betty: And then three and a half years later God blessed us with Robin, our miracle baby that I wasn't supposed to be able to have. So God does have a plan if we don't mess it up; if we'll just wait on him and take every step following him.

Charlotte: I think we try and do God's job for him. We're good at tidying up God. Okay, God, that didn't work out. I'll do a cover campaign for you.

[Laughter]

That's kind of like what Martha did, when Lazarus died. When the sisters were like, "Well, we buried him. It's okay, you're late. We got it down. We threw the service. It's okay, Jesus."

He's like, "Hey! Did I tell you that I would be back? And did I tell you what I would use this as an occasion to bring glory to my name?"

See, sometimes we throw the party too early, sometimes we close the door too soon and God is like, "No, I can do dead too."

[Laughter]

"Actually, I do some of my best work at dead. So just leave it alone, and let me, in the middle of what you think is the worst case scenario, show you that I am the best God possible."

James: What do you sense people will get as they go through the pages and see what God put on your heart? What are you hoping will happen in them?

Charlotte: Well, several things. When I wrote the book, I love people, I just love God's family, I love people. So I wrote hoping to step into people's shoes and feel the empathy and feel the compassion but then give some tools. So I didn't want people to just read a chapter and

then go about their lives. Every chapter ends with points. Here are three things now to do with what you just read. Here are three things that you can do with this moment in your middle, and every chapter ends with three things to pray. So I wanted them to read and have faith but have a Selah moment at the end and go, "Okay, here's the deeds I'm going to put to that."

So I'm hoping that the book is not just something you read and put back on your shelf but it becomes a guide through your middle. And I become, with the help of God, a voice through those pages of encouragement and strength and cheering you on and saying, "Come on! Find the miracle in your middle!"

James: Do you appreciate Charlotte and the way she communicates what God has put in her heart and her mind and her journey?

The book is in the bookstores. You can go online and get it.

Do you have a web site if people want to know where you might be speaking, like if you come over here as a missionary to the states again? What's the web site?

Charlotte: I seem to be here a lot. You must need a lot of missionary help.

[Laughter]

James: We're very needy. We don't even speak proper.

Charlotte: I'm trying! I'm trying!

James: We need it. Where do they find you?

Charlotte: CharlotteGambill.com.

James: If you'd like to have the book, we'll be glad to send it to you. Just ask for it.

Let me say this to you. It's very, very -- to us it's exciting. In no way do we feel like it's a load or a weight. We feel like it's a joy. Our viewers join Betty and me in sharing life, not just in word but in deed. Sharing love not just in word but in action.

One of the things that we do that gives our viewers the greatest joy is to give something that lasts a lifetime but represents eternity. We talk about *Water for Life*. We have to have water to live -- can't live without it. But what about the water of life? That which gives us eternal life, which Jesus referenced even as he spoke with the woman at the well, "You drink here you thirst

again. But if you drink the water that I give you, you will have everlasting thirst quenched by my presence and my power."

Well, our viewers love to do what we love to do and that is to share the love of God in action. Drilling water wells and giving people fresh clean water is one of the greatest joys of our life, and our viewers. I want you to listen to the heart of one of our best friends; we call her a missionary. She is a beautiful musician/communicator and a wonderful writer but she is a missionary. Listen to her as she hears the story and you know what? We're the solution to the challenge she talks about.

On the mission field

Open captions:

>> I feel terrible that I could do nothing to help my grandson.

Tammy: At some point we all wish we could go back -- that we could change things. But for some people even if they could go back, there's nothing more they could do.

Open captions:

>> I had no money to buy water. All we had was water from the pond. So I just put sugar in the water. He got sick with vomiting and diarrhea. It happened so fast that they didn't have any money. I tried to give him herbs to help with the diarrhea. My grandson died in the night.

Tammy: For Eh Meich to go back would simply mean reliving this horrible tragedy all over again. There's nothing we can do to bring her grandson back but we can provide clean water to countless families just like hers and alter the course of their lives forever.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I walked out this morning very early to pick up the newspaper and Betty also said, "Would you put this in the mail box?" So I carried an envelope out, it was a check to St. Jude's children, because some parent said if I could find a cure for my child... and we have the hope they'll find it. That's why we support them.

Betty and I would like to support everything in the world if we could that matters. I know you would too. But what I want you to think about with what you just heard from Tammy Trent, our beautiful little mission worker, musician and communicator, we've got the perfect cure for what took that baby, that grandson, that grandchild. I'm asking you to give it today. Just like Betty,

we can hardly ever look at a little child without thinking we've got hope for this one. Well, I'm telling you we've got perfect hope, perfect help, perfect cure.

And here in the last days now, *Water for Life*, to get these 500 areas that we've targeted, Betty, we need everybody to help us.

The wells are \$4800. If you could give one, please do. I believe you will. I believe you'll find great joy in doing it. If you can give \$1200 or \$2400 and pray others join you we'll have another but most people give \$48 and that gives ten people water the rest of their life, \$144 gives 30. So it just breaks out to where if each one of us would do what I did today, we did something to help, but we're doing it with hope until we find the cure. Here we've got the cure; it's just a matter of delivering it and the support; that's what I'm praying our viewers will do.

Betty: Absolutely! Me too, James! Just as that grandmother, there's nothing we can do about the loss of her grandson. She never dreamed that he would pass away before she did but she didn't have any way of saving his life. But, you know, we do! We have the answer to her heartache and many like her that are losing their children and grandchildren. Let's stop that process. Let's stop that death that is taking place that doesn't have to because we can drill those water wells and give them the pure, fresh, clean water for their children.

James: With all my heart I believe you're going to do it. So here's what I'm asking you to do.

Father, please direct those who love you and love others, those who care; in Jesus' name.

Listen to me, you can go online, LifeToday.org, take your bankcard, use it like a check and just make the largest gift you can; would you? If you can afford to give enough to take care of 30 and give water for 30 with \$144 do that. If the \$48 is what you do, do it. But if you can drill a well, drill a well, or a portion of it. And pray somebody will step up with you and match what you do if you give \$2400; another one matches it, we've got another well. At whatever level, help.

If you want to call and use your bankcard, dial the number on the screen and take that card, use it like a check, and make the gift. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE*, that's what you're giving. But call us please, we need to hear from you, we need to know. We've got to tell the missionaries and the workers they're coming to your area; we've got the resources to get the drilling rigs there. Would you do it please?

We have some beautiful gifts to give to you to say we love you. We want to invest in your life because we do as you're investing in the lives of others, a gift of love, a gift of life. Thank you so much for doing it.

If you ever get a busy be persistent and press on and call until you get through because lives do depend upon it. Thank you 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, Betty and I thank you for your help. No way to describe what it means to those who get the water. If you'd like to have Charlotte's book you can get it in the bookstores or you online. If you say, James, "We've helped today, we've made a gift of water, we want to help." To say thank you, if you'd like to have this *Miracle in the Middle*, and boy, you've been somebody's miracle in their crisis, we'll be glad to send it to you. Just ask for it.

We appreciate Charlotte being here. Would you like to tell her thanks for coming to the states to help?

Thank you, Charlotte. And bless you and your church and your ministry!

And thank all of you for your help. I hope you visit the stream every day -- stream.org! Go there for the news that matters and the answers. Thanks for watching.