

8/20/15
Week 34 WFL: Last Week
Kent and Amber Brantly

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! We're so delighted that you could join us. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: I tell you a lot I like to look at you. I love your smile.

Betty: You're embarrassing me.

James: This studio is just full of beautiful smiling women. They look like they're sweet like you. I mean they really do. Then we've got the most wonderful woman here that's so sweet, and her husband is just a miracle. This whole situation is a miracle.

We've got Dr. Kent Brantly and his wife Amber with us. They have a book, I think the story, which you know a little bit about the story but you don't really know a whole lot about it, but it's a real miracle story.

I would just say -- I would say publicly as part of the introduction that I looked at them a little while ago, we were just enjoying some time together alone and I said, "The love of God, it really flows in your countenance and who you are." And you know, he is a miracle because he did live through Ebola, and he was there to help the people with this incredible situation as a medical missionary. You prayed for him. They want to share what they're learning and what they believe the Lord wants us all to learn.

So let's welcome the Brantlys. Would you welcome Kent and Amber to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

Glad to see you. You became very well known which was totally unexpected in the way in which it happened; it was not only unexpected, it was very uninvited. Just go ahead and capsule. Here's a man, we hardly knew what Ebola was but it didn't take us long to realize it was terrifying. It was almost so terrifying that even now you're going to measure your words so that you make sure people understand they don't need to live in panic. But just capsule what

happened to you when you went with Samaritan's Purse, as basically a medical missionary, it was in your heart, and what happened?

Kent: Amber and I both felt that God had called us to be medical missionaries -- lifelong medical missionaries. After finishing my medical training, we got our start on the mission field through Samaritan's Purse post-residency program. We had a two-year assignment in Liberia.

We moved there in October of 2013 with a plan to be there for at least two years. After being there about five months, the news hit the headlines of an Ebola outbreak in the neighboring country of Guinea and it very quickly spread into Liberia. And at our small mission hospital, ELWA Hospital run by the S.I.M. mission agency, we began preparing for the worst case scenario.

We ended up not seeing an Ebola patient in our facility until June of 2014; so about three months after the outbreak was first identified. But once we began treating patients at our facility we became the treatment center in Monrovia, city of a million people, and in our little five bed isolation unit we began treating patients with Ebola.

After about seven weeks of day in and day out around the clock caring for patients with Ebola, I woke up sick. And three days later, received the definitive diagnosis of Ebola virus disease.

James: How did that hit you the minute you found out because you as a doctor had some idea of how serious it was?

Kent: It felt like a death sentence. It was a very surreal moment when my friend Lance was talking to me through the window; my friend John was standing beside my bed in full personal protective equipment, of course. And Lance said, "Kent bud, the test is positive."

Betty: Where were you Amber?

Amber: I was in Texas and I had just come home for my brother's wedding three days before he started having a fever and feeling bad. And just for a visit. And he was going to join us the next week to come to the wedding and then we would all go back to Liberia and reengage in the fight.

James: Things changed.

Amber: Yeah. We haven't been back yet.

James: Take us on the journey because like you said, you felt like you got a death sentence.

We got the word of it here in the states and around the world. Our program *LIFE Today* airs around the world and we knew what was happening. People were praying for you. The connection with Samaritan's Purse -- because we have actually partnered with Samaritan's Purse in various projects over the years from the very beginning when Franklin started because I've known the family a long time.

But you were on our heart, and then it was in a way like a miracle happened when you were able to come back because Samaritan's Purse had enough connections to be able to talk about possibilities to do this. And you would have to say it was a miracle that it even happened with a definite interest on the part of Franklin and Samaritan's Purse leadership that you were able to come. How do you explain what began to take place?

Kent: Well, first I want to be sure I take an opportunity to tell all the people in this audience thank you for praying for me and for us. That is a sincere thanks from my heart because I know that there were thousands, hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of people around the world praying for us in the midst of what seemed like our crisis. But Samaritan's Purse gave every effort to take care of me.

Franklin called Amber just less than an hour after my diagnosis and told her, "We don't know what this is going to mean but we're going to do everything we can to take care of Kent." And they did. And it took not only the effort and resources of Samaritan's Purse but the United States state department and Emory University Hospital and Phoenix Air group, and so many entities that came together to do what had never been done before, and to fly a sick Ebola patient across the Atlantic Ocean and put him in a hospital in Atlanta.

James: When you look back because you did experience the miracle of getting well; how do you explain that? A lot of people praying for you, a lot of people working with you, you're a medical doctor.

I believe you're a very compassionate Christian. I believe both of you are. I believe you love people because you love God. So what do you see unfolding here? And what do you want people to hear from the journey that you've been on? What do you want to pass on that would enable us to better understand the heart of God and the will of God?

Kent: When I was discharged from the hospital I made a statement. I said, "God saved my life." I stand by that statement. I believe God saved my life.

But it's not a simple issue for me. I know that there are a lot of people that took issue with that statement. They felt like that was a really arrogant statement for a guy to make when he received emergency evacuation and experimental medication, some of the best medical care

available anywhere in the world. But I'm not denying those things; that is how I see God saving my life. All of those pieces that came together to provide me with the care that I received, it was a very unlikely, improbable series of events.

And it was not just things that happened in the moment. We often look at the miracles of God and we say it has to be a momentary supernatural occurrence. But the people at Emory University Hospital had been preparing for 12 years to treat a patient like me and they had never had -- they had two cases during that 12 years that turned out to be false alarms. They had never had a patient who actually had a serious communicable disease like their unit was set up to treat but they kept practicing. And there were so many other pieces to the puzzle like that.

The fact that this experimental drug that was grown in tobacco plants in a greenhouse in Kentucky had never been given to a human being before and they had just made enough of it for the monkey trials and a little extra, and some of that medicine for that rare disease ended up at my bedside in Liberia when I was about to die.

James: So you're saying God does things through yielded vessels.

Kent: One of the scientists who helped develop the drug that I received, ZMapp, said, "I now see that the miracles of God are in the details over decades." I think that's a beautiful observation.

James: Yes, it is! So it wasn't just prayer, it was people who were also putting their hand to the plow to try to find something that might in some way alleviate suffering. Really, the God who created us in his image has put at our disposal that which he created to be used for the benefit of others and his glory. And that is precisely what was happening.

I believe if a physician looks with a heart of God, which I sense that both of you do, you're going to be looking with the healer's heart, you're going to be wanting to pass on what the great physician would pass on so you're diligently working in that. I think that's probably the reason you went to the mission field in the first place. You went over there to assist and alleviate suffering; am I right? -- As well as to share the gospel.

Kent: We did. And I always go back to compassion as one of our main motivators for going to do what we did and what we want to return to doing. The compassion that Jesus showed the people and the root of that word means to suffer with, to set aside your own right to safety and comfort and to enter into the suffering of others. And I think that's what he calls us to when he says, "Love your neighbors as yourself."

He said, "There are two important things in this life: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

I think it's that sense of compassion, of being willing to set aside your own good to enter into the suffering of another to show compassion to them. I think that's what he is talking about when he says "love your neighbor." That's what we want our lives to be about.

James: Amber, what do you see the two of you heading to now? What do you see? God's kind of given you the world to speak to and you're doing a marvelous job. Both of you, every time we saw you, you magnify Jesus. There was no vain glory. You cared about others. What do you see the Lord doing now?

Amber: I think that we'll go back to our original calling. And he has sent us as medical missionaries to a foreign setting, foreign to us. So it's really what we hope and dream and are praying about doing. We're just waiting. We're waiting on him to show us where that will be and when.

James: What do you say to people, doc, when they say, "We didn't get well" and "we lost our loved one"? We lost a daughter that had as much faith as is possible for a human being, I believe, to have, and had seen miracles, and yet, she lost the battle to cancer while all of you who love us and knew prayed with us. What do you say to them?

Kent: I've been asked that question why? Why you? Why do you get to live when 11,000 other people have died in this outbreak? I don't -- I can't give a satisfactory answer to that question. I can't find a satisfactory answer to the question why?

The question I can answer is, so what now? I am alive so how will I use this life that I've been given? I think that's the question that really, all of us answer whether we recognize we're being asked that question or not. We answer that question with how we live, whether we've had a near death experience or not. We're being asked, what are you going to do with this life you have? And that I can't find the answer to why but I will give an answer to so what now?

Betty: It is about we won't get the answer to why always but it is about, God, you've put us on a journey, you've set us in a direction. Now what do you want to do with us on this journey? How can we best convey the love that you put in our hearts and the compassion that you've talked about, to demonstrate it to others? Because there are so many hurting people out there; not only physically but spiritually and they're lost.

And God says, "Let me point you in the direction. I've got someone waiting to hear what I've done in your heart." So I think that is the key that we just be available to him and be full of his love and be prepared for what he wants us to do.

Kent: That's a question that I'll continue to wrestle with though because it was not 11,000 nameless faces, people that died of this disease. They were my patients. They were my friends. Some of them were my co-workers. And so it is not a question to be blown off. It is one that I will wrestle with for the rest of my life.

But you're right, that's where I land now is okay, what would God have me do now?

James: Let me just say since I'm on the end and we're part of the ones that didn't see the miracle we all hoped for, and we know many prayed.

But here's what I do know. This week, our daughter, who is very much with Jesus and was very much with Jesus here, her son, who graduated from Baylor in May, is this week going to Angola on a mission trip with our mission team. His name is Chris, Christopher, and he is a great leader. He is going back to work in the church, Church on the Move in Tulsa where he played quarterback and played in the outfield. And now he is going back to coach and be an example.

His pastor, Willie George said, "Chris is as great a leader as I've ever known." The other two children, the youngest daughter Calley and the middle one, Cody, they work with young people in the church right now.

Calley said, "I'm not even going to go to college, I'm just going to help kids." She is just like her mother. Dad is on the leadership board. I've said, "Ken, you show us Jesus."

Here's a family that didn't get to see what we hoped but what he hopes for all of us, we're seeing in that family. That would be our daughter's hope; that's Mom's hope and Dad's hope.

So what I'm saying to you because the Brantlys had this incredible compassion expression as we talked of care for everybody that didn't have the same miracle story because he's a physician and he knows a broken heart and a heavy heart and a hurting heart is in need of healing and health just like the physical body. So I simply say to you, your faith didn't fail, nobody else's did. We don't need to blame the medical community. We don't need to blame our decisions or anything.

We just say Lord, God, with this difficult moment, this challenging situation, this valley of the shadow, be who you are. Let a world in great darkness see the greatness of your grace and your sufficiency.

And wouldn't you say, Dr. Brantly, and wouldn't you say, Amber, this is what people need to hear? That we have an opportunity to magnify him -- and don't you want to see that? Well, we've seen it in you -- and to all of you. And what we're seeing with our daughter, it was not a life lived in vain and yours must not be. We give glory to God.

Do you appreciate the Jesus that you see in this couple? And the miracle that he not only...

[Applause]

-- the miracle that he not only performed in Dr. Brantly and in others but the miracle he wants to perform through you? Just know you are here by divine assignment, you're here for purpose and let God use you. Our viewers, you're talking about missions, our viewers love missions. They're the most unique people. I don't think they watch *LIFE Today* to hear me; I think maybe they want to see if Betty says something because it's like, "We just want to hear Betty."

But I do know this about you and I want to thank you. I believe you like to show people Jesus and I believe that if you think Jesus would do something and you could for him you would.

Here's something you can do. You can save lives, you can give them Water for Life and point them to the water of life. I want you to watch because I think you're going to want to do it.

On the mission field

Announcer: *LIFE Outreach* travels the world to the most remote areas of need where water is scarce and clean water even more so. God's Word says faith without works is dead. So love is put to action in a tangible way -- and you were part of that, every meter drilled down, every rise and fall of a hand pump. But as we spend time with those in need listening to their stories what often surfaces is pain so deep and hope so absent, no water well can lift their hearts or heads.

>> I worry that I could die any day. I have no children and no hope.

Announcer: Fortunately, we come with the one who can lift hearts and heads.

>> But I recognize that you died for my sins.

[Repeats]

Announcer: When you give the thirsty a drink, you give it unto Jesus. But we are compelled to introduce them to him as well, and miraculously, hearts broken from children lost begin mending. Tears of pain turn to joy as they taste of eternal water. And again, you are part of that. You send us, you send Jesus in us, and it is with great joy we go. For while the transformation and families and villages, their futures brings great fulfillment. Little compares to the joy and reward of their eternal future secured. At times we have posed the question, what would you do if this was your family in need? Well, guess what? Many of these are family now -- and forever.

Thank you for partnering with us. May it never end.

End of clip

In the studio

James: And it is forever. He gives us eternal life. We don't get it when we die. We get it when we receive the source of eternal life, when we receive Jesus.

That was the grandson there with his little wife of one year on the mission field -- our oldest grandson Luke and his wife Cassie. It was beautiful to see them. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing!

I just want to say thank you for helping us give hope to villages like that. The beautiful thing is we not only feed the hungry or give water to the thirsty but we point them to Jesus.

Betty, when they've seen the love of God so clearly expressed to meet a legitimate need then they listen to us and we talk to them about Jesus.

Betty: They really do. Thank you so much for that because I feel like you want us to show you the needy, those that are hurting, those that are on the edge of death because they don't have the water they need, the pure water -- they drink the diseased water because that's all that they have.

God loves all the little children of the world and he cares about each one of us, and he hears the heart cry of those precious little ones when they whimper. He hears the heart cry of that mother as she is watching her child die because of lack of water.

I believe you hear the heart of God as you say, "I want to help. I want to be a part of that" because God is pleased when he hears that come from our heart. Won't you join with us and

let's drill these water wells so we can see the children as we saw at the beginning jumping around in the water, pumping that water up and so happy? It's Water for Life and then we present the water of life and that's Jesus Christ.

James: And you could actually see them trusting Christ. People feel love when they really see it demonstrated. That's what you enable the missionaries to do. They tell us the viewers of *Life Today* all over the world, they let us stay here and share the love of God not just in word only but in deed, in action.

So would you please right now, would you help us drill those 500 wells in 12 different countries? It will be an answer to so many people's prayers and heart cry. You can go to LifeToday.org and many of our viewers now are doing that. You go online and make the gift, use your bankcard like a check.

If you dial the number there on the screen, take your bankcard, use it like a check, and make the largest gift you can. The wells are averaging \$4800 a piece. Many of our viewers say, "We want to drill one. Each year we want to do that." And some do it. Perhaps you can.

Or you can give a part of that, \$1200 or \$2400 and immediately say, "God, help someone match it. Or three others join me and we've got a well." Most of the support comes from people who give \$48. When you break it down, that's like giving 10 people water the rest of their life; \$144 which many are able to do gives 30 people Water for Life.

We have some gifts to send you to say thank you, to help you draw closer to the Lord in devotion and in prayer and in your witness. But what you're doing right now is you're expressing the love of God in action.

Please go online or dial the number and make the gift God put on your heart. You're giving life and we thank you so much for doing it. Remember, this is the last week for this emphasis on the 500 wells. We really need to hear from you if you can help. So please communicate with us and thanks for your gift.

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.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I want to say thank you. And I'm thanking and we'll all together thank the Brantlys but I want you to know the book is in the bookstores. You can get it in the stores or you can go online. But if you'd say, "James, we'd like to have it. Would you mind sending it to us?" We will. We simply ask you to let us know if you helped us in any way to drill those water wells, just say, "James, would you mind sending it to me?" We'll gladly send it to you.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to the Brantlys for being here? And thanks to God for his grace, his greatness and his healing! Thank you all! Back to the missionary field and the mission field; you stay in touch with us. Thank you for watching! Thanks for helping us share life!