

9/29/15
Week 40 Southeast Asia center
Rescue life
Jep and Jessica Robertson

James: Hey! Thank you. Don't you wish you were here? You should. And if you've ever heard of or watched Duck Dynasty or heard some of these wonderful things that they say and do as a family then you'll be happy to know, we've got family members here. I think most of you really did love Sadie and the family when she was Dancing with the Stars and just really having a wonderful time with all that they've been able to do.

Well, I'm James Robison and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. Betty is not here at my side. She has just had, not something -- to me, it's major. If it is on family members, it is major. If it is on me, it is serious major!

[Laughter]

But she just had cataract surgery; put a lens in that they say will bring her back to 20/20 and then she'll be doing the other eye. She is doing really well. Just please understand that she's out for a good reason.

I'd like all of you here to join me in welcoming Jessica and Jep Robertson to *LIFE Today*. The Robertson's! I told you when we had a little time together how much we appreciate the family. We really do! We think that you're showing what it looks like to have a family that have some standards and really understand what it means to build a life and a future on a rock-solid foundation, which Jesus referred to, the one that stands the storms.

In your book here, and this is really, really an attractive book. I told Jep, Jessica, that you really make certain that it is and you're radiant. Both of you really have, you've got a lot of your face hidden there, Jep, but there is --

Jep: It's pretty under here.

James: Yeah, there is in your countenance, I call it a glory -- a grace glory. Your title here in your book, *The Good, the Bad, and the Grace of God*; I want to hear your story but I want to say to you that I can already see in just our interaction the grace of God. You're basically saying you needed that. Jessica, introduce us to your journey a little bit, and then the two of

you, and then let's talk about some of the things that maybe both of you faced but he definitely has opened up about where there was some real hurt that could have destroyed him.

Jessica: Really, the book is about our struggles in life but also how we overcame them; and of course, it is through God's grace. We all need forgiveness. We all rely on our faith in God for that; to know that we have a better hope that's not here on earth. Through our struggles it is not like nobody else has struggled with the same things we have but we wanted to lay it out there because it kind of looks like we live in a little bubble of happiness and there is a lot of laughter on Ducks but we're real people. We struggle with things just like everyone else does, whether it is self-confidence and being young, an eating disorder, and putting my self-worth in my appearance, trying to get approval from other guys, other men. So that was definitely something I struggle with. I felt like I had to look a certain way because that's what TV said I had to look like. Or that's what the world thinks is beautiful -- and it's a lie.

Really, Jep and I, when we started seeing each other I was going through a divorce. I was 20 years old; felt like a failure. I felt like I was never going to be loved; I wasn't worthy of love. I got into a lot of drinking and putting myself in situations I wasn't able to get myself out of. When I heard that gospel, I ran to the water -- I mean I ran to it. It was a must and I wanted that cleansing and I wanted to start my life over.

Actually, Jep baptized me. This is when we were just friends. It is a beautiful story of finding that forgiveness from our Father, but also knowing that it took many years after that to forgive myself and actually let it go. Because sometimes as Christians we hold on to that guilt, we hold on to the pain we've caused other people. It took a long time for me to actually lay it down at his feet.

James: By the way, you all met I think when you were around 20 years old? And you did marry shortly thereafter. Did you see her, Jep, as a changed girl, even though she had what she considered a past? Did you see God did something in her that attracted you to that change?

Jep: Yeah. I think kind of what she said is when we met she was broken. I think I had just gone through a lot of brokenness myself, and I think that's kind of what drew us together. Kind of my story, as everybody knows, I have great parents and my brothers are awesome and I grew up in a great Christian home. When I was a young kid, started when I was about five, I was sexually abused. I didn't tell anybody about it. It went on for a couple of years.

James: You were abused actually, if I understand right, by a girl a little bit older than you. She was quite young herself. It's kind of an unusual situation but nevertheless it had an incredible impact.

Jep: Right. She was in high school. It was one of those deals when you're a kid that young, she said, "I'll kill your family if you ever say anything." And I believed her. I didn't know any other way. I held that in for most all my life.

As I got older, got to be in high school, I kind of got in with some guys that I thought were super cool and it was kind of my first time to try some drugs and alcohol -- but really drugs. I think that kind of got me in a place where I could kind of forget even more about what had happened to me, and ended up in a very bad way.

What was awesome was, and it goes to show you my family, just how great they are, just good Christian folks, servants, is they had an intervention for me. Willie had actually left a note on my truck that said, "Jep, I know what you've been up to." I was like oh, boy!

[Laughter]

Because I thought I was hiding this really well. I thought I had everybody fooled. I show up at my parent's house and all of my brothers are there and it's really early in the morning. I'm like, what are they all doing here?

My dad just kind of laid it out. He said, "Jep, you can keep doing what you're doing. You'll probably end up dead or in jail. We're not going to support you through it. You know what's right. You can be on house arrest."

He did say this. He said, "You're going to have to duck hunt every day."

I was like, "I could do that!"

"But we're going to get in this and we're going to study it and you need to have your own faith."

I said, "Dad, I've been kind of living off your faith."

He said, "I know it, son." He said, "You need to have your own faith."

So we studied. It was the best few months of my life. That's when I came to know Christ and it was awesome.

James: Now this had taken place evidently, this change, not too long before you all kind of connected; right? Were you working on like a church staff in some way? How did you happen to baptize her? You think she was cute and she was cool to baptize?

Jep: Well, we were --

[Laughter]

No, I was in like a college-age ministry of sorts, and we would have a lot of college-age people come over to our house. Me and my buddy were living together going to college and we would just invite random people over, tell them our stories, tell them about Jesus and just hang out and have fun and just have a good time without any bad influence. Jess just happened to be one of those girls that got invited over. We were totally friends at first but it didn't take me long to realize, this girl has got something special.

James: What would you say and what do you want people to take from the book? Which it is in the bookstore and you can get it online. And I think the journey that they have experienced where they talk together about what honesty and pain taught us about faith, family, and forgiveness. This is something we all need to learn about. Their story is real that many of you can identify with. And you've kind of seen this family but you get a closer look at how the reality of the faith, not religion, but a real faith relationship with God, it's personal and with Jesus as not just a historical figure but a present reality, how it can affect. It is for you.

I really feel like a lot of times religion and religionists and religious representatives' failure keep you from the relationship that Christ came to make possible, and this talks about that. What do you want, you see people that you're trying to communicate with and you want them to read the book, what do you want them to take away? What is the thing that you pray happens when they read your story or hear it?

Jessica: Well, a lot of the book is after we got married and a lot of the struggles that we had afterwards. There was a moment in our relationship, seven years into the marriage where there was a make it or break it moment where I was like I'm done! I can't take this anymore. I was hurt. And I had a great support system because everybody that God put around me, they just embraced me with love. It wasn't this, they weren't tearing him down, they weren't saying you don't deserve this. I really was blessed with having Kay and Lisa in my life.

I just really began to look at him as a soul versus Jep -- like versus my husband. He's not just my husband; he is a soul for Christ. If we can fight for our marriages to stay together, if we can love Christ more than we love each other, which is what we need to do, he needs to be the center of our marriage and it wasn't until that that we learned to let things go. We learned to let the little things go. We know we can get irritated at each other but we're not walking out, and eventually we start laughing about it. Like I'm like, "Are you going to be all huffy and puffy for a while?" And then we just start laughing.

So it makes it so -- the big picture is heaven bound and what can we do to help each other get to heaven and to get to our kids in heaven and raise them in the word and the love of Christ? And that's really what we want people to take away is there is always hope. Never give up. Seek out help when you need it. Just love and forgive. It's basically faith, family, and we live our lives like that.

James: You have four children, ages?

Jessica: It is 6, 9, 11, and 12. Sorry! It's usually every two years but now we're at an awkward stage.

James: She indicated something happened and put a stress on you. Did you miss the mark in some way? Did you contribute to this tension?

Jep: I did! I think a lot of guys have gone through this. I looked at pornography. It wasn't something that was I guess predominant that I was doing but every now and again, it was just so easy to look up. It's just boredom more than anything else -- idle hands. That really hurt Jessica so bad. It took a lot of just praying and me just telling her, like, "Baby, I'm sorry. I'm just being honest about my life."

Jessica: I don't think men look at it like how the woman feels and the woman feels inadequate. It sets up this huge like failure in intimacy; like that's not what intimacy is. So it's unmet expectations and it gets worse and worse and worse. I don't think, like he said, he may not have done it often but it hurt deeply no matter how much it was.

James: Probably it was hurting him too. He was probably was regretting it. Let me ask you this question. Did you feel like a failure when you missed the mark in this area?

Jep: Big time.

James: Had she come down on you with heavy condemnation and probably making you feel worse about yourself when you didn't really need any help feeling like you'd missed the mark, had the family not loved you -- by the way, did they reach out to try to help you out of this or did they just slam you down?

Jep: No, no! They reached out. And my oldest brother Alan, which has been here before, he is kind of my go-to -- if anything is going on I go to Al. I'm like, "Al, I'm struggling with this. This is happening." He's just such a wise man. He totally just talked me through it and was like,

"It's going to be okay." Because I was very depressed and I thought what if I lose my family? It was super tough. Jess, it was tough, she was hard on me at first.

Jessica: I was hard the first several days. It took a while for me too because I was looking at me. It's all about me and my hurt. When I stopped looking at me...

James: Your shortcoming, your failure, you're not enough, you can't satisfy -- all of this feeling of inadequacy.

Jessica: When I actually gave it to God and actually looked at him in a different light, as not just him as my husband, that's really what changed. From then on out I've been able to do that. I've been able to look to Christ to fulfill those needs of acceptance and love and forgiveness. Because ultimately, I needed that forgiveness at one time and I'm like, "Who am I to not show forgiveness to my own husband who I want to go to heaven? I want him to feel that forgiveness and that mercy."

James: You weren't for a moment approving the failure, you weren't even approving it but how do we get out from under the load and how do we get free? Listen to me very closely. In the book, by the way, do you deal, do you kind of flesh this out in a way to try to help people walk through it to show a couple of things, how you might feel on both sides, and what is needed and what is not needed to help, and then showing how the family, stepping up like a real family with that Father, not just the father you had, but that Father, God, that they were able to walk you through it. You're trying to show people that no matter where they are there is a father and there is a family of faith and love that can help you walk through it?

Jep: Exactly.

James: This is what you reveal?

Jep: Yes, sir.

James: It is critically important.

Let me just say this. Right now we have got a nation that is really trapped, it seems like by unhealthy attractions; whether it is compulsive behavior or addiction to substances or to food or to those things that are not good for the temple of God and for our health, and we've got people who are living together unmarried, going to church every Sunday, or who are defeated and trapped by some addiction or by porn, and we've got the same sex attraction.

Now here's the thing we've got to understand. Every person that is trapped by something that causes them to live outside God's will and the standard of measure, the Word of God that he's given us to show us what the solid foundation looks like, and what a principled structure looks like so that we can live a healthy meaningful life. When you miss the standard, which you did, had you moved the standard to find approval of your behavior your marriage would not have been spared; would it? Had you not moved over, back to the standard, moved to be corrected by the standard and the people who loved you holding the standard high, not beating you up with it but showing you this is the foundation. Do not move the standard. The standard is reliant. Move back to the standard. Do you all understand what I just said here in this studio?

[Applause]

Do you understand that in order to know how to build your life, your relationships, your future and to preserve and protect your freedom you have to build the house on a solid foundation -- not sand, not shifting standards? Please hear this!

Father in heaven, help the church to see this. Help the nation to see this. Help every person that is defeated as we all fight these battles and too often lose; help us to move back to the standard, not to be given over to depraved thinking because we have changed your truth into a lie. God, every person today that is in a battle, let them see that there is victory in peace to be found only in your truth and the freedom you offer, Father; in Jesus' name.

Do you need someone to pray with you? You see that phone number there? It's always there as a prayer line paid for by love. You will find many times when you call us for prayer you're going to be talking to someone that's been perhaps through some of the same things you've been through and you're going to be loved. Nobody is wanting to beat you up. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are receiving the grace of God through Christ." So please know that.

Would you say thanks to, I think, a very courageous and beautiful couple to tell their story? Would you say thanks to Jep and to Jessica for the book -- for your story, for your family? You give our love to all the Duck Dynasty family. We love you and appreciate you.

The book is in the bookstores. Online, you can get it. And I will tell you this, if you will simply look at what God has put before us right now, and the incredible blessing and opportunity God's given us, and you say, "You know what? I'm going to help you do that," we'll be glad to send you the book.

We're also sending and I'm telling you, you talk about millions sold, Sarah Young's incredible devotions. Here is one of the most beautiful books I've ever seen in my life; taking the best of

Sarah Young and giving you something that is so beautiful, *Peace in His Presence* -- that's where we find it.

Let me tell you what we want to do. We want to give some people peace in the presence of God that only love expressed through you can make possible. I want you to watch closely and see if you want to be a part of sharing God's heart as it relates to this opportunity. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: This girl's name is Pinky. As a teenager she was looking for work but she was deceived and sold to a brothel.

In Nepal, Kutu was kidnapped and assaulted by a human trafficker and was driven towards the Indian border.

Lyna was sold to a brothel by her own mother and was beaten when she refused to service several men.

Sreynty was orphaned at eight years old and was living on the streets. She was trafficked into a brothel soon after.

>> When I hear stories like these it fundamentally breaks my heart. That's why we have missionary partners working all around the world reaching out and rescuing and restoring young children targeted by the human traffickers. In fact, some of these children can be as young as four, five, six years old.

Now the problem of human trafficking is not getting smaller. It is actually growing. So we need to step up our efforts and reach out to not only children who are at risk but those who are still in the clutches of the traffickers. We are fighting the powers of darkness so we need to provide a center of light and safety for all young victims.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Oh, I thank God for all of our mission workers who put their lives in the midst of that pain, suffering, and tremendous need. The hidden cameras that take many of those shots, our team oftentimes, is in danger. Betty and I, years ago, we were held captive; I was like held hostage. We never even let those things go out for concern that if they found out that they could do it and frighten anybody they would multiply and do it more. So we didn't talk about it.

But I'm just telling you that these missionaries, filled with the love of God put their life in the midst of such immense suffering that can only affectively be addressed by that love and real compassion. But those who have that love have to have the undergirding and the support. You, our viewers, above all people, the missionaries say, you all have to be the most wonderful people on the planet, they think, because you help them do what God called them to do -- you enable them to do it. We really do want to rescue those precious children.

And now we have a place to establish a safe house, literally. You talk about a real house of help and hope. And we can get the children. And the miracle is that when we found out we could build it so much less expensively and it would be such a fabulous facility, and they would be safe and secure, a family stepped up and said, "We'll make an \$820,000 gift toward that." Which means we need \$410,000 now to finish the facility; and of course, we need \$128 per child or per woman or person that we help through the year; and that's a modest amount but that's what it takes.

So you could help us. You say, "I'll rescue someone. I'll give \$128." But how about helping us also build that safe center, that haven of security and hope? Would you give a gift? Let's just take an example of \$40 and it's multiplied to \$120; it has three times the impact. \$80 goes to \$240 -- it is tripled. Many people say, "I wish I could give a real large gift." Well, \$1200 given right now is multiplied to \$3600 in its effect. Would you go online right now in love and in prayer and make the gift God puts on your heart to help save those precious children and establish this safe haven for them -- a future and a hope? Would you offer them that help?

Take your bankcard -- use your bankcard like a check. That's the way we should always use them, like a check, and go online and make the gift God put on your heart. Or you can dial the phone number and use that bankcard like a check. If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE*, but call us and tell us what you're mailing. We need to know so we can let the builders, the contractors, the mission workers, all of them know we got it -- let this family know we got it. Your love has been multiplied. Your love will be multiplied.

We want to send you some beautiful gifts. We'll send you *Peace in His Presence* by Sarah Young. This is fantastic! You can actually look through it just for the beauty. It is so wonderfully -- look at that -- positioned. One of my hobbies is photography; I wish I could do some like I see. But the message, the devotional thoughts, it is just fabulous. We want to say thank you because we love you.

The Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel" is a beautiful canvas, framed beautifully for you, your home, or wherever you want to use it. It will be a testimony of the love of God.

Please go online right now or call that number. It is always there if you need prayer but today it is there so it can be an answer to someone's prayer. Give them hope. Please make the call and thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Innocent children created to be happy, loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators; their spirit and bodies broken under horrific, emotional, and physical abuse.

Our dream is to build a unique child rescue center in Southeast Asia, a safe haven 100% dedicated to rescuing young victims from sex traders and helping them begin the recovery from the abuse they have suffered. This dream of a new rescue center can soon become a reality with your support, combined with a promised \$820,000 matching gift. All we have to do is raise an additional \$410,000 to begin construction. That means your gift today will be matched two-to-one having a triple impact! Gifts of \$20 will be tripled to \$60! \$40 will be tripled to \$120! \$80 will be tripled to \$240! And generous gifts of \$1200 will be tripled to \$3600 to help us rescue children from sexual slavery.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you Sarah Young's newest book, *Peace in his Presence*; favorite quotations from *Jesus Calling*.

Also, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help us build the child rescue center and you may request this beautifully framed canvas print of the "Forest Chapel."

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I want to say thank you for the love you express. I believe you're part of a miracle. We'll send you for any gift, Sarah Young's book, *Peace in His Presence*; the Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel" painting canvas already framed, it's beautiful.

If you'd like to have the Robertson book, *Jep and Jessica*, we'll send it to you. If you just reach out and say, "I want to help those children; I want to finish that center." Would you do that?

Would you join me in saying thanks to Jessica and to Jep for telling their story?

Thank you for coming over here. Thank you so much! And bless you.

Thank all of you for watching. Please encourage your friends to watch *LIFE Today*!