

8/17/15
Week 34 WFL last week
Jen Hatmaker #1
Book: *For the Love*

James: I like this! I'm going to tell you. There are a lot of real happy people here. They're not happy to see me and Betty.

[Laughter]

No. They say, "Hurry up! Cut to the chase." I'm James Robison; Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

Jen Hatmaker is here. I'm thinking what does she do? Because I did have to tease her about her name, Hatmaker. She said it was tough on the kids to be Hatmakers. They hate it. But she is really and truly the best-selling author of the book called *Seven*. She has a real touch of God on her life. Betty and I have just known her today; we've known about her but we love her. This room is full of people who have been blessed by her and love her and I think you're going to enjoy meeting Jen.

Would you welcome Jen Hatmaker to *LIFE Today*?

Jen: Thank you, guys!

James: I want to mention, Jen, because in the bookstores or online you can get *For the love: Fighting for grace in a world of impossible standards* -- many of them set by the church and by religion, which is so unlike oftentimes the loving God relationship that we can enjoy. But the book is there. But we'll also be happy to send it to you because we love you and we like to bless you. Okay, Jen, tell us about your journey because you've obviously had something happen in your life that has made such a difference that it's obvious. But just tell us a little bit about yourself because Betty and I don't know a whole lot about you.

Jen: I grew up sort of traditional, actually. My dad was a pastor. Kind of a rogue pastor so let me -- actually, I've got to be honest with you, you remind me a lot of him -- like a whole lot.

James: Is that okay way?

Jen: It is the highest compliment. I mean he is rogue, and you are, and he's a hunter and he's a rancher and just everything you're saying I'm like, I know this. I know this! So I grew up sort of in a traditional church setting. And I was a very by-the-book person. I'm a rule follower -- well, I'm not anymore but I used to be. And I followed a lot of rules and I did a lot of spiritual and religious things correctly. Just the template that was given to me; I said, "Yes, I'm drinking this KOOL-AID and I'll do all of these things and therefore earn God's favor and all my grace." So I didn't like to err too far off the beaten path.

So I married my husband in college and he is a full-time pastor. So we went straight into full-time ministry and it was fortuitous for me because I was very right about everything so it was a good time to be in ministry.

[Laughter]

Especially because I was 22, as you can imagine. So I went into full-time ministry very correct and we served the church full-time; we have our entire adult lives. A handful of years ago, and I'll just have to make a long story short, God sincerely interrupted our lives. And for us it began with what was, to our shame, a brand-new understanding and compassion for the poor. And I really didn't have a category for the poor up until that point. I was very, very busy serving saved people and blessing blessed people. So I didn't know any poor people.

James: What did you happen to see? What caught your attention?

Jen: It started with God in his Word so that made me furious because you can't argue with it.

[Laughter]

And then I just started reading it and there it is -- all this time it was right there. It just felt like it was something I'd never even seen in my life. So God began with us in a physical way because that's just the way we need to learn, so in our community we started with the homeless because we just had nowhere else to start. So we started with the homeless community in Austin thinking, well, maybe that is enough. Maybe that will be enough to like do this next right thing. But it accidentally snowballed into an entire life. So what it resulted in was us leaving the church where we were on staff. We are now church planters. We started a new church in Austin and now we like love all the poor people that there are.

[Laughter]

It started with maybe this one particular demographic in our community and has gone to the whole world and we are the better for it and we'll just never be the same.

James: Well, we experienced some of the same thing.

Betty: And what you're talking about is God moving you out of your comfort zone and that can be kind of scary at times.

Jen: I hated it!

Betty: Because I was a lot like -- I was a lot like you. I did everything by the rules in the church. I did everything! Every time the doors were open, I was there.

Jen: Well, me too. I was incredibly churched. So I was very well versed in the rules and in the talking points. Those I had down. And in just some of those things that are trapped under the steeples. But anything outside of that was completely ignorant to. Anybody who could not find their way to our church campus on a Sunday, anybody who was too broken or suffering too greatly to find their way into our ministries, anybody who didn't live in my neighborhood or country, and so all of that was just blinders peeled off.

It was really a painful time actually, a lot of spiritual upheaval, and it came with a lot of loss, honestly, but the gains were worth the loss. I'm so grateful to be on this side of the story and to look back and go, you know what God did? He saved us! He saved us from a life of complacency. You can be lost in the church your whole life and never hardly know what Jesus sent us here for. I was well on my way to that path. So I just feel like God redeemed us from one way we were going and set us on a new path.

James: You act like you're really enjoying it.

Jen: I am now! Now I am.

James: So did you find some homeless people?

Jen: We did! I've got to tell you, probably more homeless people in the city of Austin have my cell phone number than makes sense. I don't have good boundaries. You know what I mean? It just went all the way.

James: So what has happened to the homeless people?

Jen: You know what? Serving suffering people is complicated.

James: It really is.

Jen: I think when we sort of -- when we said yes to God in these new directions we had shiny feelings about it. Well, let's just go in and fix it all; let's just solve it all. We have so much to offer.

Well, eight years down the road we've learned a few things. We've been schooled by life and by people who are way further ahead of us on the journey. So now we just know that life is hard and humanity is complicated. We're not really fixers. We're nobody's savior, we're brothers and sisters. So we come alongside of people in that capacity with love and with grace and with compassion, and not always with answers at all because that's way more complex than I thought it was going to be. But it is still kingdom-centered and there is so much life and redemption and hope in it, and so much good news that bubbles up all the time, even if it's not the way I thought it was going to look. So it is still the greatest story I've ever lived.

James: And is it catching? These here act like they caught something you've got.

Jen: Is it catching?

[Laughter]

James: They do act like they caught something. What would you think it is that they caught?

Jen: I would love to hear them say that. I would hope that what some of these women would say that they have caught is a little bit of contagious passion. I would hope that they have caught a really sincere, gospel-centered love for people. I mean people -- the wonky ones, the wobbly ones, the mean ones, the dirty ones.

James: How about the church ones?

Jen: Well, now you're just really getting up in my story. That is the whole thing.

[Laughter]

I'm on an interesting journey with that too.

[Laughter]

James: How about the churches like each other?

Jen: We've had such a good conversation about this today and I love it and I could talk about it for a hundred years.

James: You're talking about our conversation earlier.

Jen: Yes, I love it. I love everything you said. Anybody who has been around me for five minutes knows that I just feel to my core that it is not just a good idea and it is not just an option, it is urgent that we start loving each other better. I'm actually devastated by what I see among brothers and sisters in Christ and over differences that are not deal breakers.

James: And they'll never be settled in this lifetime.

Jen: And they don't even have to be.

James: No, they don't have to be!

Jen: In fact, I told you earlier, my life has been incredibly enriched by other believers from different traditions, from different sort of faith streams, from just -- they have different practices and I think, well, look at that. That feels like Jesus to me. I don't even know what that word is but I'm going to learn it.

Betty: Why do you think it is so difficult for Christians to come together with their differences? Because you know you don't have to look very far within your own family. We have three children, and 11 grandchildren and a great grand baby soon, real soon -- in fact, I've got somebody checking my phone all the time. But they're all different. But we're in the same family. We all have -- we look different, so many of us, we might see a little bit of favor but I think it is the same way. We have things in common as Christians if we just recognize those things. God created us different. Goodness! James and I would -- if we were just alike, we have to temper one another.

Jen: I can see that.

James: I would not have liked you if you were like me.

[Laughter]

Jen: Thrill of the chase?

Betty: But God created those differences.

Jen: I think that in general I see usually two culprits rise up when we're looking at disunity among believers, and I haven't even talked about how we treat people outside the church; let's go there next. But I see it from one of two things; usually either fear because we just so deeply want to be right. If anybody else has a different way or a different interpretation or a different practice or just a different style it feels threatening and it indicts us almost on what we're not quite sure about. So I think we're afraid to be wrong. I think we're afraid that you're different view means mine is wrong and that's not true at all, it just means it is different.

So I see fear and then I see arrogance. I think it is a big culprit in the church right now that with good intentions to stand solid on what's true and good about our word, about scripture, and to have just well-practiced beliefs. It has turned a very lovely message into one of arrogance, and that turns into control and then it just wreaks havoc among people. I think about you mentioning coming around the table with leaders that are so sure, they're just so solid in their space.

James: And they're all so different and diverse.

Jen: Diverse, but sure where they're at. So I think that's okay. I think there's something beautiful about capturing certainty and holding our truth dear. But it is when we can no longer be in unity with other believers who are from a different space, now it is a problem. So I see a lack of humility as a great flaw of the American church right now.

It is my deepest and most sincere hope that in leadership space that I have, which is teeny bitty, but in this little space God has given me that I will practice a different kind of leadership that is humble and that is gracious, and that is loving, and that pulls up a chair around the table and says, "Tell me about you. I want to learn about you. I want to hear about where you're coming from because I think we have so much to learn from each other, and we have so much in common to share and we can tell about our story."

James: And religious practice becomes pretense, a ritual; is one of the most ungodly, un-Christ-like things we can see. It gives us a haughtiness and an arrogance and a pompousness -- even in the way I'm sitting you can almost see that. They're so proud they can strut sitting down. It is just unbelievable what happens to us and it is so unlike God. And because it is connected in some way to a reference to God people actually don't think they like God because they've seen that and they've never really seen God. They've seen the most unlike God thing and it is all over the world.

Religion can be very damaging, whereas the relationship that we're invited into, which you're excited about because you're on this journey and it has energy and vitality and it's like fresh

water just flowing out. This is what you've moved into and people are thirsty for it. This room, this studio is full of people who are thirsty for it. They think they got a glimpse of the glory of God. It wasn't the glory of Jen, I mean you're all right, you look nice and all that.

[Laughter]

But it is something so much more bigger.

Jen: You're passable.

[Laughter]

James: But it is so much bigger than you.

Jen: I hope so!

James: Well, it is and they know that because they can see that and that's what they want because they can buy the clothes, do the hair, wear the big earrings, they can do all this. Hey! That's not the deal. There is something inside of you that is absolutely -- I would say it is contagiously charismatic in that it is that magnetically attractive. Does that make sense? And I say it is Jesus, girl. That's what it is. That's what I see in you. I see Jesus.

Jen: Thank you. I've said before that I feel like if somebody doesn't love Jesus they just don't know him. They can't --

James: Never really seen him.

Jen: We've got a really, really good savior. And I love when Jesus talked about just being able to hold the new wine, and what being a new wine skin looks like. I think, I hope that as believers, (and this is our generation of the church, it's the only one we get,) that we're very willing and flexible enough and gracious and humble enough to address the wine skins when they need to be changed because the wine is good. The wine is always been good and it will always be good. And when people get a taste of it, it is healing, and it is restorative, and it is transforming and it's thrilling, and it is also a relief.

So I watch people come into an encounter with Jesus, not an encounter necessarily with the church, or with another Christian or with religion or dogma but with Jesus, and it is unmistakable the difference. That Jesus is really as good as he ever said he was. It really, really, really is good news. So if people don't think it is good news then we're not doing a great job of representing him.

James: Well, I'm 71 years old and I'm still soft, flexible wine skin. I'm ready to receive it. I've set my sail to catch the fresh wind of the spirit. I don't want to be like one preacher friend of mine, James Ryle said of preachers. He said, "Most of us preachers are standing on our boat blowing on our sail."

[Laughter]

It won't move! He said we need to set the sail to catch the move of the spirit. Do you believe this girl has caught the wind of the spirit and the wind of the spirit is carrying her? But I feel like, Jen, I feel like you set your sail to catch it. Am I right about that? You don't want water to wade in, you want a river that carries you beyond your own capacity into his fullness.

Jen: And I trust Jesus to be all that and more. I really, really do. My husband and I have even said, "Listen, this is where we're at right now. This is what we're doing. We've got this church where God has us in this place of leadership and communication but if tomorrow the wind blows in a different direction, off we go!" We hold it all really, really loosely, sincerely. So whatever comes next we say yes to it. We already told God, "Our answer is yes forever." So whatever it is, it is yes.

James: I told my leadership staff today in a meeting earlier today, I said, "I hold these treasures of the Lord wonderfully but they don't hold me." I don't worship them. I don't worship what God does. I worship who he is and who I know and I want him to carry me. *For the love* - - this is God's love, and fighting for the grace. We'll talk about that some more because this is a new book. Are you ready to talk about it some more?

Jen: Sure!

James: Y'all want to hear her some more? We'll have another program this week.

[Applause]

In the bookstores, online, if they want to go to your blog and kind of do some of this interaction where do they go?

Jen: JenHatmaker.com. It's that easy.

James: And they can go there and you will say something.

Jen: I will! I say lots.

James: Do you do video too or is it all...

Jen: I do. I do some of it. I'm not good at that. I'm not very techy. I have helpers but I have plenty of words and they can get them all there.

[Laughter]

James: And in the book she puts some more because she couldn't get them all on the blog. But she is still blogging all the time. I like you!

Jen: Thank you! I like you too.

James: Now listen -- it's okay, Betty, we're friends.

[Laughter]

Listen to me. Here's the thing, please hear me. You know what I wish? Because I said to all of these beautiful women and the men that are here, the courageous men that are here, I said this is church. This is family. Y'all haven't even met each other but you're family.

Let me tell you something. God wants you in his family. He loves you so much. I just wish you knew how crazy he is about you. Yeah, he knows you. He wants you to know him.

You want somebody to pray with you? That number is there for you; we're always ready. You'd be surprised. A lot of the people you call and they pray with you, they've been on the same journey you're on, same place you've been and that call is paid for by love.

Betty, what we do, that we love to do because our viewers love to do it, we're going to give people some fresh water. Yes, we are! We're going to give them Water for Life and we're going to tell them about the water of life. We're going to demonstrate that love.

This is our last week in this emphasis. I want you to watch. But I want you to listen to God and I want you to be his hands. It's going to be a wonderful beginning or perhaps a great new start. Watch!

On the mission field

>> This is my water. This is the only water I have. Everyone in the village uses it. Even the animals use this water. I know it is bad water. It is scary but what else can I do?

I have to give that water to all of my children. One day about three months ago my two-year-old girl started vomiting. [Crying]

She was sick all day and she died that night. I am afraid for my other children now. They always complain about their stomachs.

We are separated forever. [Weeping] I can't stop thinking about her. It is so painful.

Tammy: I understand pain well and I understand loss well. I know what that feels like to just feel like you're dying inside because there is nothing you can do to change what's happened in your life. I think that's why I'm here at this moment.

I feel like this is why God has called me here even at this moment to ask you if it would be you -- if you would be the one to help her. It would make a huge difference in the lives of this precious woman and her children, other families in this village and villages all around the world. We can come in here and drill them a well that will give them Water for Life. It will change everything in a moment's time. Please don't hesitate. Don't wait any longer. We need your help.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Tammy is doing her best to comfort a broken heart, knowing how much they need clean non-contaminated water. Tammy lost the love of her life, she lost her husband, not married long, a swimmer, and he drowned. Yes, she knows what pain is.

Betty, we've been holding mothers and people's hearts and lives for years. I can remember so well one of the earliest I went into Angola; the first times, we had to circle in to keep from being hit by stinger missiles; that's how all planes came in. I went several times without you. Finally you went and we went into Rwanda where there was just an incredible situation of children dying. They had all this medical equipment that was so obsolete and we began to bring the equipment and bring medicine and food. But you held one mother, if you'll remember, we were there, this is years ago, and they were using a little suction to try and keep this baby alive and we lost the baby. I remember you holding that mother that was like that. It is so difficult to watch something like that that's so painful.

We've lost a child so we know the agony. And the thing about it is, Betty was holding and then I remember in that same place, now think about this, because we showed you the broken heart

and the need, and we began to really minister, and a few years later one of the most famous pictures ever taken, ever in history was a beautiful lady in England, Princess Di and she was standing at that place where you held that mother who had lost her baby and she's holding a little baby. And she is making an appeal to feed those who have need and this baby doesn't have need. That baby is healthy because you helped save that baby's life and you more than got that baby healthy, you got that baby real healthy. But it was the appeal coming from her where she saw a miracle. And she said to the world, we need to take care of the poor -- and we do.

Now, there's not a greater need in the world apart from knowing Christ, the water of life, to having clean non-contaminated water. Contaminated water, unclean sources is the greatest challenge in the world to health.

With your help, and God's leadership, and the missionaries and relief workers, we're committed to drill 500 wells. This is the last week that we're emphasizing it this year. We need a miracle response. They're \$4800 each, that's the average. If you can drill one, I believe you will. You'll be answering a lot of mothers' heart cries and prayers, just like that one. You'll be a miracle worker. If you can do it, do it. Whatever part you could give; \$2400 and another join you, we've got a well; \$1200, three join you, we've got another one. Most of the gifts come at \$48. That's how most come and that basically gives 10 people water the rest of their life. Could you do that? \$144 is so simple, 30 people.

Whatever you can do we're asking you please, go online, LifeToday.org or dial that number. Take your bankcard and use it like a check and make the best gift you can. Will you do it? Please do it. We have some gifts for you but you're giving the greatest gift, you're giving the gift of life. Please do 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.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, we thank you so much for your help. I do remind you this is our last week for this emphasis. I know you'll do what you can.

If you'd like to have Jen's book it is in the bookstores but you help us give someone water, and you ask for it, we'll be more than happy to send it. We're sending you the "Every Day a New Day" devotional and journals. It's by the seasons, the four seasons. But I think you're going to want this. I think you'd be blessed by it. Do you agree?

Do you want to say thanks to Jen, that she is the blessing? Jen, we want to talk to you some more about some of what you put in the book. Will you do that?

Jen: Yes.

James: Come back to *LIFE Today* this week? All right! Thank you for watching. Thanks for helping us share life!