

1/18/16
Week 4 WFL
Chrissy Cymbala Toledo

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*! I'm Betty and this is James.

James: Well, the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir is... I don't know. Some people might say it's at least a little bit of a competition for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. They are spectacular; the giftedness of God on those incredible singers and musicians. Jim Cymbala, the Brooklyn Tabernacle, let us just say to you, here at *LIFE Today* and in behalf of believers all over the world and people who respect, love, and recognize it, thank you for being an example and expression of God's love and the leadership role for the way you've all inspired us. Chrissy Cymbala Toledo is the daughter in that family and that church.

Ravi Zacharias says of this book that Chrissy has written, "You will be both touched and challenged. It is a life-changer!" It is called *Girl in the Song*.

Would you welcome Chrissy Cymbala Toledo to *LIFE Today*?

Chrissy: Thank you! It's great to be here!

[Applause]

James: All right. I have already said some nice things about the church family but you're at the tabernacle in Chicago. What is it called?

Chrissy: Chicago Tabernacle.

James: My goodness! How creative!

[Laughter]

You're a pastor's daughter, that's challenge enough. Sometimes it looks to me like from your story here, the *Girl in the Song* that you didn't necessarily handle the challenge in the best way.

Chrissy: No. I have to say this. Being a pastor's kid for me was a blessing. I felt like I had a front row seat to all these miracles, all the things that God would do from week to week,

especially in the inner city in Brooklyn where at the time it was like a ghetto. We were greeted by derelicts and drug addicts at the front door of our church. So I saw my parents were the real deal; they were authentic Christians, and I felt really blessed.

The problem, really, in my case, I had a little secret that I kept. I had kind of a little crisis going on in my 12-year-old heart. It was this desire for perfection. I wanted to be the most perfect, the most pretty, I wanted to make my parents proud, I wanted to make the people of the church proud. But when you become a teenager it escalates and when you become aware of the opposite sex it turns into a longing to be good enough to be chosen. And that's what my book's about. And I'm thankful because it is resonating with girls who see themselves in the pages of the book and it's also bringing insight to parents and I'm praising God. It is showing them how the enemy deceives our kids and then ultimately drags them away right under our noses and we don't even know how it happened.

James: You worked on this living up to expectation and perfection.

Betty: I wanted to be the best girl that I could be. A lot of it was, mine, was out of fear that if I wasn't, then God was really going to get me.

James: And that's really a bad, bad view to have.

Betty: So what happened in your case? What kind of road did it take you on?

Chrissy: Well, my life, I was always in the presence of God. I was really blessed. Prayer was a huge part of the ministry.

James: Did you see it as God's presence, not just religious...?

Chrissy: Absolutely!

James: You saw there is God, there is his presence, I've witnessed it, I've sensed the power.

Chrissy: I didn't deny its power. I knew it was real. I experienced it for myself. But I had this secret and I thought if I tell my parents what I'm going through and some of the things that are going through my head, it's just kind of embarrassing. I don't want to go there. I'll work this out.

But I didn't work it out and it got worse. It turns out that music was also, as you know, Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, it was a big part of my world. Although my life was surrounded by Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, my ears started waking up to another song in my teenage years; and the songs of this world was fueling the fire and feeding this longing to be good

enough to be chosen. I was intrigued by the music and the *Girl in the Song* and who is she and am I her? Do I measure up?

And then lo and behold, a guy walked into the church, a brand new Christian, and I was the worst person he could have ever met because my heart was cold. And I thought this guy, he's a guy of the world. If I could get him to think that I'm special -- I must be that girl!

It ushered our family into such a dark season. I mean you talk about pain and our home turned upside down. I didn't know who I was anymore. I was in this obsessive relationship. I became a liar. I became a deceiver. My parents didn't know me anymore because I was driven and believed this lie that it was too late to go back. It got me to such a low point.

I remember my dad telling me after the fact that a pastor friend once said to him, "You know, Jim. Why don't you just give in and accept Chrissy's lifestyle so that you can have a relationship with her?" Because we were separated from each other because of the way I was living.

He said, "No. I'm not giving up on my daughter. We're going to believe God."

And it was because of a prayer meeting that I'm here today.

James: Tell me about the prayer meeting because I know you talk about it here. Something happened to you.

Chrissy: Well, I wasn't at the prayer meeting but I'll tell you this. I wasn't at the prayer meeting but that night and it's really described in detail in the book, I had an encounter not even thinking that there was a prayer meeting going on. I didn't want to think about the prayer meeting. I had an encounter with light and darkness that I'll never forget. It was this darkness --

James: Is it like a vision?

Chrissy: I was lying in bed and there was this dark figure in my room. There was this light figure.

By that point, I was a single mom. My baby was in the crib. And this dark, whatever it was, this thing I saw, I don't know if anybody else would have seen it but I saw it, spoke to this light figure and said, "I have her."

And it came over and pointed to me. I know this sounds crazy but I saw it!

James: I don't think it sounds crazy!

Chrissy: Then went over my daughter's crib and said, "And she's mine too."

It was so real. I can't even talk about it after all these years without crying. It was so real! And I went to sleep peacefully, not knowing that the people of God were calling on His name for me and laboring as though -- they were laboring as though they were going to give birth to a miracle and they did.

James: Let me just pause right here. Don't you thank God for what you just heard about focused prayer? I want everybody here in the studio, and Chrissy and Betty, I want you to just join me. Listen to me. When you focus prayer, and I really believe the Lord gave me this picture and understanding, it is like taking the life-giving power of a river; everywhere the river flows life springs up, it's the nature of water and the life that it produces. But if you take that river, which we've done this all over the world, and you force a part of that river through a turbine, that focused force will light up a city; that's the energy and the power created.

I want everyone at home right now and all of you here, there are people watching right now that say we've got our Chrissy in our family, it's my grandchild, it's my son, my daughter, it's my spouse, it's a neighbor -- we want the miracle that got to Chrissy. And so we're all going to agree right now in your behalf and everybody join.

Father, we ask you to release the transforming power of your Holy Spirit in such a way that you appear to those that are trapped as clearly as you did to Chrissy; and that they can see what the powers of darkness are robbing them of, that the source of light that will give them everything they have ever needed or desired. For your purpose, for your glory, you will set those captives free, bring the children home, bring the lost sheep into the fold under the watch care of the mighty shepherd. God show us miracles, as we agree for these family members, friends, acquaintances, and those we're concerned about, set them free miraculously. God move on them. And we ask you to heal our nation; in Jesus' name.

Thank you for praying. I'm expecting miracles to occur.

Chrissy, you experienced what, as a result of that prayer meeting? What happened afterwards? Because I think this whole story came as a result of what happened.

Chrissy: I woke up the next morning and all I knew is that I felt a lightness. I had tried -- I had tried to come back to the Lord. I had tried to make that call and break up that relationship and I

never could. That morning when I woke up, the woman I was staying with, I called her into the room. I said, "You've got to come here! You've got to come here! I want us to pray together."

I said, "But I want to pray this morning."

And I began to pour out my heart to God. But I didn't know the chains had already broken off of my life because God's people prayed. And because of that, my daughter -- I could just go on and tell you the amazing things that God has done in my life. He gave me a husband, a daddy for my daughter.

James: Now we met him and he has the beauty and the glory of God on him.

Chrissy: Amen! And my daughter is now 26. Susie Joy, married to a godly man, on staff at our church, gave us a grandson and one more is on the way. I mean God is so good!

So when people read this, they're going to read a very interesting, inspiring story -- true story. They're going to see the spiritual journey and the supernatural power of God.

What do you hope they draw from the book as a result of reading on the pages your story and the journey you had in the Lord? What do you hope happens in their life as a result of reading what you shared?

Chrissy: One, I want parents to see, like my parents very well knew, is that when parents pray parents win. There is no doubt about it. When grandparents pray, grandparents win. You never know which prayer is going to tip that scale in heaven and bring you your answer. That's why you can't stop because it could be that very prayer; that prayer of faith that brings that child home.

And two, for the girl that kind of sees herself in the pages of my book, that she would call upon the Lord like I did. It says in Psalm 50:15: Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will answer you and you will honor me. That's why I wrote the book; is just to honor God for all that he's done. So that's my prayer.

Betty: That's great! One thing I hear you saying too is that when you were so weak you were defeated and you felt like there was no way out. That prayer, the power of prayer and what it did for you because there were people warring for you in your behalf, for your life and your return to God and his purposes for your life. So the power of prayer...!

Chrissy: Amen! So I give girls an invitation to pray with me at the end of the book. I start the prayer but I don't finish it for them because they need to talk to God. I think today young people

need to know prayer isn't this far off thing that we can't get our head around. It is just open your heart to God. Tell him that you need him. Talk to him throughout the day and make it real.

James: It is conversation with God.

Chrissy: It is conversation. I heard someone; I think it is one of the produces here. He said, "I said the other day, 'Dear Lord,' and then all of the sudden I felt like the Lord was saying, 'Just talk to me -- just talk to me throughout the day.'"

So that's what I'm encouraging my generation, even my children, just keep that conversation going with the Lord.

James: Don't you think that the more we talk to him, the more sensitive we are to hearing his voice? You actually heard his voice in a vision. It was a very clear vision. It actually would be considered a very terrifying vision but it was simply the truth. But it seemed as though that light in the room might not have been saying something that this other dark cloud, dark force and source of saying. But here's this bright light there that is the light of the world and the hope of the world and it was just there.

You said, "I went to sleep in peace." It makes no sense that you would go to sleep in peace; you've heard no good word. There's no peaceful world that's been delivered. But there was a presence of peace there. That's the light; that is the peace that passes understanding. You don't understand how you went to bed. That's the power of prayer.

She was being held in the aura of that light, in the arms of a loving God, a shepherd that will go get that one sheep that's outside while the others are doing well. He's out after that one. He was after her; he was there. He got her. That is the reason I called you a moment ago for prayer for people you are concerned about so we can join with you and that was not of little consequence. We're expecting to hear significant testimonies of what God did to set free someone you are concerned about and praying for.

So you're really trying to do what I think we even saw with the *War Room*, which was a call to prayer. There are a lot of things that are being delivered now that you could see a story, a true story in a film that tells the truth, and it is hitting home. I think Hollywood, which recognizes success and the monetary, they're beginning to see that there may be some value in actually occasionally speaking the truth in the dramatic presentations and maybe presenting some realistic hope in what we're putting out.

Maybe we don't have to wait for *Schindler's List* to show us what love did for the Jewish people in Germany when one man stood up and then wondered, what else could I have done? We need

to say together, as those who are gifted, we can deliver the truth. How about we pray for that? I've been saying to our viewers for years, rather than criticize Hollywood, how about praying for Hollywood? How about praying for the miracle in Hollywood that occurred in you, a preacher's daughter? That's the power of prayer. Do you agree it's time for us to start praying? And you thank God for an obvious answer to prayer.

I tell you what I hope and we'll be happy. Listen. The book is in the bookstores. You can get it online. We will actually send you a copy if you'd like to have it.

One of the things I really want to see happen, because see, Betty and I have 11 grandchildren and we also have a great grandson and he's just really beautiful. Some day our granddaughter is going to give us permission to show you a whole bunch of pictures so you will see what a real grandbaby looks like! A great grandbaby! Because he is the cutest little thing! It is just amazing. This is the way we're supposed to feel.

Listen to me. I love these children and grandchildren. I love your children and grandchildren. We love the children of the world. You're going to join with us in a moment and put God's loving arms around people in pain. I want to tell you something. The power of prayer can restore this nation to sanity, to security, to stability, to safety. Do you understand that? We need God's help. Quit just reading it on the coin: "In God we trust." Trust God. Pray to the God you trust and let's pray for the miracle healing of a very needy land. We need God's oversight. We need God's shelter. We need the wisdom that comes from divine providence. So pray! Would you do that? Would you make that commitment?

Let me show you. You're going to love this, Chrissy because you see people in need and you and your husband, your church, you want to help them. You know prayer works because you are part of a miracle of prayer. But right now we've got a lot of people that are hurting for the simple fact that they can't reach out like I can right here. You think about how concerned in America we are about clean water. People buy bottled water a lot because they don't just necessarily trust it out of the tap as being what it might be if it is some kind of special well water. In other words, we believe water is important and we want it to be good quality.

What if you had no water that was not contaminated and disease-ridden? And you looked at your children and your grandchildren? What if a miracle could occur and those who never had would suddenly have the blessing of love. Watch.

On the mission field

Announcer: In a remote Amazon village, vastly unfamiliar from the world we know, lives

Ticcoya. This young mother's world revolves around her children, and their care has driven her on in a world that is arguably one of the world's most challenging to live.

Open captions: The water of the river is filled with parasites. It makes us very sick. My son became sick from drinking the water. He was vomiting, he had diarrhea, and then he died.

Announcer: Resilience and instincts are a must for survival here. But some battles are never meant to be fought. Like disease-filled water against the immune system of a child.

Open captions: My little boy was a very happy boy, a very strong boy. It hurts for me to remember him.

Here, in our village we bury our lost children under our beds because it feels like they are still with us. I can dream of him running and playing and I sleep over him to cover him with my love. I still feel so sad I lost my son. I try not to let the rest of my children see my sadness. But when they sleep at night, I cry for my lost son.

Announcer: With little choice, Ticcoya presses on, heart shattered, both from her loss and because her situation remains the same -- the same water, their only water.

Open captions: I look at my other child and wonder if she will die also.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Oh, boy! You've got to wonder... We don't understand why you would bury your child under your bed, trying to feel close to them. We did. We lost a daughter. We feel close to her. We know where she is. She is not lost, she is in the presence of the Lord but she is not here with us. But I identify with what that mother feels.

And then when you look at that little girl and she's giving her the very same water and she's wondering what is going to happen to her. Betty, what goes on your heart when you look at the situation?

Betty: As I was listening to that mother, I felt in her heart she was saying, "I want to keep my children safe." And by burying her child under her bed, she could still feel some closeness to that little boy that she lost; that she said was so happy and so strong until the water, the diseased water took his life. It breaks my heart because that is the nature of a mother is to want to protect

her child. She feels like she has no way to protect her children. But to just hope by some circumstance, James, that her little girl won't die the same way.

But we can make the -- there is a simple solution. They need clean water. They need a choice and I know they would choose the clean water. We can provide that for them, James.

James: I don't want to check out or cop out by saying there is no way we can help all of them. I know that. God knows that, you know that -- but we can help her. We can help her little village because we've done it all over the world thousands and thousands of times because of people like you who said, "I won't just look in and say, hmmn, that's sad. I will offer, as Jesus said just a cup of water in His name, clean water. I'll offer a well of water. That's what I'll doing. I may not be able to give the whole well but I can give part of it. And I can join with other people and we can drill one in her village and other villages."

So right now, with the inspiration of missionaries who are right in the midst of that suffering, weeping along with those mothers, rightly so, we can be an answer to the prayer and the heart cry of those parents and family members and the missionaries and we can drill a well in that village. We have targeted 500 areas in 15 nations right now with godly missionary oversight. We know the water is there. We know we can access it; it's at different levels.

And presently, the cost average is still \$4800. So you might be able to drill a well. Somehow, I believe if you can, you will. We have people who tell us, "One of the most exciting things we do every year is try to drill a well, or at least drill a part of a well." We've got some people who say, "We've committed, we're going to drill several." And we've inspired people in ministries and organizations to drill wells. So when we drill a well, we inspire the drilling of wells on the part of others.

So we right now need your help to drill 500 more wells. Would you drill one? \$4800 or give half that amount, \$2400 or \$1200 and pray for other person to join you or three to join you? Would you do what most people do? And I think this is attainable, \$48 averages giving ten people water the rest of their life -- not a few years, the rest of their life. Could you give \$48? Or \$144? Break that out, give 30 people water. At what level could you help?

Would you go to LifeToday.org right now? Many people want to give online, and that's just like instant, we've got the resource. Or you can dial the number. Either way go to LifeToday.org, dial the number, take your bankcard, use it like a check. And right now, please!

Father, help them to be anxious to do it and to make the best gift they can; in Jesus' name. Would you right now take that bankcard and use it like a check?

We have some gifts to send you to bless you and inspire you and to say thank you. Thank you for giving life! Thank you for being an answer to that mother's heart cry and giving her little girl the life that boy never had. Thank you so much!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice: drink water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

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 15 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 people; \$48 will help provide for 10 people; \$72 will impact 15 people. And \$144 will help provide for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift we would like to send you James Robison's book, *God of All Creation*. Through his personal observations of animals and wildlife, James shares heartwarming stories and spiritual lessons of God's love and grace.

With your gift of \$100 or more, be sure to request *Majesty*. This beautifully illustrated book teaches you the blessing and significance of the names of God, including Jehovah Rapha, your healer and Jehovah Jireh, your provider.

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 you may request our beautiful new "Majesty" bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'm sensing in my heart that you heard the heart of God and you're extending his hands. Thank you! I want to bless you with all God has created, the *God of All Creation*; it magnifies him. *Majesty*, the names of God, the promises that are in his name. The beautiful bronze, "Majesty," what God literally reveals in the beautiful creation of wildlife and everything we see.

And if you'd like to have Chrissy Cymbala Toledo's book, the *Girl in the Song* to inspire prayer and to speak to girls that may just really need to hear the story and the message that she's sharing, you simply help us give a cup of water. You want the book? We'll send it to you. We want to say thank you.

Would you join us in thanking Chrissy for her testimony, her story? -- For inspiring us. Give our love to the church family. And to Brooklyn Tabernacle.

Chrissy: I will!

James: And to mom and dad, and all the people who prayed. Pray for us here at *LIFE Today*; would you? -- And the outreaches of *LIFE*. God bless you! Thank you for being with us.