

2/23/16
Week 9: Rescue Life
Ravi Zacharias

James: I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I actually came up here to the studio without an audience just to talk to you. As a matter of fact, I wish that I could reach out right now and take your hands and say, "Please listen to me!" Because what I'm sharing is not only vitally important to you, related to every concern you may have, whether personal or family or maybe you're concerned about like I know you are, Betty, the direction of our nation. It is very disturbing. It is reason for great concern and a lot of prayer.

God says and this is a promise, this is not faint feeble hope, this is an absolute promise: If my people called by my name will humble themselves, (admit you can't do it on your own, you need help) if you'll humble yourselves and pray, seek my face, turn from your wicked ways, I will hear you, I will forgive and I heal your land. Our land needs to be healed.

God cares about families. I think he cares about our nation because he invited a nation to come and reason together in Isaiah chapter one, not just individuals like Betty and James -- the nations. I feel like God is calling us back into the shelter and shadow of his presence and his power.

Betty: Absolutely! I feel that way personally in my own life. I feel like many of you do. It's a time -- a very, very serious time. I've never seen it more serious in our lives, in our nation, in our world when we really need to be falling on our knees and praying, the importance!

And also, realizing the power of prayer; we are seeing it with individuals, with churches, and how God is awakening the church to say, "Okay, it is time. Pray! And then walk in the light that I've given you."

James: I want you to know that during this program you're going to look in on a service at Gateway, this is the church that Betty and I go to. Robert Morris was an associate with us for years and traveled with us. He's family. He's like a son in the ministry. What a great leader he is. And Gateway has been an encouragement to the whole church.

And Ravi Zacharias spoke to our church family and it was telecast but there are two parts of this message that I really want you to hear. As a matter of fact, in just a little while I'm going to

cut you in on where Ravi is actually sharing about one of the most gifted people, perhaps in many ways that ever lived, and yet he was an addict, an opium addict, defeated. Oh, you need to hear.

And then an incredible prayer, a poem by one of the greatest perhaps poets of all time but it's going to actually, I think, usher you into the presence of God.

Ravi Zacharias is just a wonderful friend. And he says that what God lay on our heart, the stream, write that down: Stream, like a river, .org, it is a river fed by the tributaries of wisdom and where received fruitfulness springs up, the very nature of a river, a stream. "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God," the Psalmist said. We want to encourage you to get wisdom because we need it and we lack it.

Now I want you to listen to what God said in Isaiah one. You'd do well to read the whole chapter where he is talking about the nation's sick, the head is sick, the heart is sick, which would mean leadership, even national leadership. The head is not healthy and the heart, (spiritual,) it is our spiritual nature, it is the church, it is us as believers. Listen to me. If we come before God we can see a miracle.

Isaiah chapter one, verse 18: *"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord.*

Come let us. As I said a moment ago, it's not just Betty and James or you, it is the nation. He invited the nation to come and reason together. If we reason with the Lord we're going to be reasoning with one another, learning to sit in the council of the godly, not the ungodly. And we're going to seek the wisdom that only comes from above.

And look what he says will happen: *"Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they're red like crimson, they will be like wool. If you consent and obey (my truth) you will eat the best of the land."*

You're going to be blessed. You're going to be blessed where you can bless. But if you refuse and you rebel you'll be devoured by destruction, by the consequences of rejecting the truth that transforms and sets us free.

Betty, I read over in Ezra what I believe needs to be the prayer of virtually everyone right now in our nation. Now listen. I think if we will go to God like this and I'm telling you, I've seen times when God so moved on people -- and it shouldn't be because we had another 9/11. It ought to be because we want the presence and power and blessing of God on our lives personally, on our family, on our business, on all that we do, and those blessings to be poured out on others that are in desperate need like a dry land. We want that.

Listen to the prayer of confession when the people of Israel had rebelled against God, had literally gotten in bed with the beliefs of the world and had taken those into their own country and it was destroying them.

Listen to what Isaiah said:

But at the evening offering I arose from my humiliation, even with my garment and my robe torn, and I fell on my knees and stretched out my hands to the LORD my God; and I said, "O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens. Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity and to plunder and to open shame, as it is this day. But now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage.

Ezra 9:5-8

God is looking for that remnant that will awaken and awaken the remnant that leads to the awakening to spiritual sensitivity to the return and shelter and shadow and protection and provision of Almighty God. Not another system like Pharaoh or Caesar or any other power but God! So that our leaders and our rulers and we have righteousness is literally leading our nation back into the will of God and to the sound foundation of truth upon which we must build.

Here is what I'm praying. God, please awaken remnant that will lead to the spiritual awakening.

This is what God is calling us to:

For we are slaves; yet in our bondage our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. Ezra 9:9

Really before the kings of the world, God is offering us an opportunity to see the walls, first the foundation, then the walls of protection preserved in our land.

Betty, you and I were sitting and listening to Ravi Zacharias; I believe he is such a great gift. Think about this. He tried to commit suicide as an atheist when he was a teenager, but God in heaven delivered him and what a great mind and heart he is. Listen to something he shared that I think is so critically important.

I pray that you will lean in and listen as we were able to do seated right in front of him.

Begin video clip

Ravi: This passage influenced the great poet Francis Thompson who was a drug addict, was on opium; though given a genius mind and applied to Oxford was turned down to it three times because he couldn't shake his opium habit. He would live in two places at Charing Cross hanging out with the losers and the lost buying his drugs, selling pencils, bootlaces and all of that; to buy the drugs to keep that habit going as an addict. At night he would wrap his dead dirty raincoat around him in the chill nights and sleep by the River Thames, Charing Cross and Thames, Charing Cross and Thames.

He's the one who wrote:

*I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways of my mind;
And in the midst of tears I hid from him, and under running laughter.
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
Up vistaed hopes I sped,
Running from the strong feet that followed after.*

One of his greatest pieces of poetry was called "The Kingdom of God." He wrote this:

*O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!
Does a fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air?
That we ask of the stars in motion
if they have rumor of thee there?
Not where the wheeling systems darken,
Or our benumbed conceiving soars,
The drift of pinions would we harkened,
Beats on our own clay-shuttered doors.
The angels keep their ancient places
turn but a stone and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces
that miss the many splendored thing.
But (when so sad thou can't not sadder)
cry -- and upon thy sore loss*

*shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt heaven and Charing Cross.
Yea, in the night, my soul, my daughter,
Cry – clinging to heaven by the hems;
Lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Genesareth, but Thames!*

[Applause]

Imagine that same imagery of the ladder is given in the New Testament as well as the Son of Man and the angels ascending and descending, communion with God. God will track you down no matter how far you run if you will only pause long enough to know he's nearer to you than you realize.

They talk about the hiddenness of God. We need to talk a lot more about the obviousness of God. He's here and he is like the Hound of Heaven, keeps following you, following you, following you. I can guarantee you. This room will never end with testimonies tonight if we opened up the microphone to see how God met us in a place where we never ever dreamed he would catch up with us.

Of all the places I never dreamed of meeting God was on my bed of suicide when I was 17 years old. He followed me right to that bed. Whenever I go to Delhi, I always rent a taxi alone and I go and park in front of the hospital. It used to be called Wellington hospital then. It's now Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital or something like that. I park in front of that and I just look in there and I say, "Lord, this is where it all happened when I was just 17."

God is following you. If you are running from him today -- stop! He's got a ladder towards you and he wants you to look up and know he is trying to get you to commune with him.

End of clip

In the studio

James: And yes, he is.

Father, I pray that every person watching right now and listening will hear the beautiful invitation of your voice and your love saying, "Come into my presence." And just as you

transformed and saved Ravi when he was so desperate, when he despaired of life, God do it; in Jesus' name.

I pray that not only for you but I pray if for a very sick nation. Let me just say this. I'm 72 years old. I don't know how long my journey is here but I want every moment of it to be spent pointing people to that shelter, that shadow, that security, that joy, that peace, that relationship that is the only thing that can satisfy the longing in our hearts. We need a supernatural spiritual awakening.

Listen to Ravi as he shares what it's like to stand before God and just tell the truth and then listen to God.

Begin video clip

Ravi: I want to close with a prayer by Michel Quoist, the French mystic. I want you to give me your undivided attention.

It's a powerful prayer:

*I have fallen, Lord, once more.
I cannot go on, I will never succeed.
I'm ashamed and I don't dare look at you, Lord.
In it I have struggled for I knew you were right near me, bending over me, watching.
But temptation blew in like a hurricane,
and instead of looking at you I turned my head away,
I stepped aside while you stood, silent and sorrowful
like the spurned fiancé who sees his loved one carried off by his rival.
When the wind died down as suddenly as it had arisen,
when the lightning ceased after proudly streaking the darkness,
all of the sudden, Lord, I found myself alone, ashamed, disgusted,
with my sin in my hands.
This sin that I selected as a customer selects his purchase,
This sin that I paid for but cannot return because the storekeeper is no longer there.
This tasteless and this odious sin, this sin that now sickens me
that I once wanted but I want no more, Lord,
I imagined, sought, played with, fondled for a long time
That I have finally embraced while coldly bypassing you,
I embraced that sin.
My arms outstretched, my eyes and heart irresistibly drawn;*

*This sin that I have grasped and consumed with gluttony, it is mine now.
But it possesses me as the spider web holds captive the fly.
It sticks to me, flows in my veins, fills my heart.
It has slipped in everywhere as darkness slips into the forest at dusk
and fills all the patches of light.
I cannot get rid of it.
I run from it like the master of an unwanted and mangy dog,
But it catches up with me and rubs joyfully against my legs.
Everyone must notice it.
I'm so ashamed, Lord that I feel like crawling to avoid being seen.
I'm ashamed of being seen by my friends,
I'm ashamed of being seen by you, Lord because you love me but I forgot you.
I forgot you because I was thinking only of myself
and one can't think of several persons at once.
One must choose, and I chose.
And now your voice, your look, your love, they hurt me.
They weigh me down. They weigh me down more than my sin.
Lord, please don't look at me like that
because I'm naked and dirty, down, and shattered with no strength left.
I dare make no more promises to you.
I can only stand bowed before you.*

*Come on, son, look up.
Isn't it mainly your vanity that is wounded?
If you love me, you would grieve, but you would trust me.
Do you think that there's a limit to my love for you?
Do you think for a moment that I have stopped loving you?
But you still rely on yourself, son. You must rely on me.
Ask my pardon and get up quickly.
You see it is not falling that is the worst but staying on the ground.*

End of clip

In the studio

James: Don't stay there! If I had allowed missing the mark, failing, to keep me down, my life would have been spent. There is not a one of us that haven't missed the mark.

Come, let us reason together. Though our failures, our shortcomings, our foolishness, our sinfulness, our rebellion, our self-centeredness too often, has caused us to miss the mark

tragically -- and we fail, we fall. But he is anxious to lift us up. And we must get up and let him lift us up. Would you let him lift you up right now?

Father, I pray for every person that senses you're inviting them into your presence to forgive and cleanse, to set free, and to send us out to be light like a shining city set on a hill that cannot be hidden; in Jesus' name.

I believe God is calling you to be part of that holy remnant. I call it the remnant, Betty that will awaken "the remnant" that will lead to the supernatural spiritual awakening I hear you praying for all the time.

Betty: I do. And as I was listening to Ravi, I thought, why would anyone run from a God that loved us so much that he gave his precious son to die that we might have life eternally? We need to turnaround and run toward him and let him hold us in his arms and lift us up. He created us to be such vessels of his and such light that people would see that light and run toward that light, the light of Jesus, the love of God. That's what we need.

James: Father, thank you for what I see in my wife and what I see in the people who watch *LIFE Today*. Awaken the remnant. Give us an awakening starting with our individual lives; in Jesus' name.

I think that I'm as blessed as any person on the planet to be able to talk to you. I think the viewers of *LIFE Today*, in many ways, you hold the hope to freedom we desperately need personally and nationally.

I'm going to ask you to do something right now. I'm going to ask you to be a miracle. I want to ask you to reach out and set free, sisters and people like them that have been trapped, sexually enslaved by terrible predators. I want you to watch this very carefully but I want you to watch understanding, "I can be the answer to that situation. I can be part of a miracle that is so desperately needed." Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: Some answers to life's problems are easy to understand like drilling a well for a thirsty village or giving a bowl of food to a hungry child. And while they take hard work to solve, needs like hunger and thirst are simple to grasp.

But 14-year-old Sokchea and her 16 year old sister, Skokly face a very different kind of crisis. One that is so sinister in nature it is almost incomprehensible.

Open captions:

>> *I lost my virginity when I was raped in Battambang province.*

When I came home and told my father, he was angry and made me leave home.

>> *Our father kicked me out of the house too... and I didn't know where to go. I was very sad. I didn't know anything about going to be live by myself.*

I was taken by a friend to a place in the jungle outside of the city. A lot of men were there and they raped me. I laid down and begged them to stop, but they didn't stop.

Announcer: Although they have since reunited, these sisters are both still trapped in the sexual slavery they were forced into. And without an act of compassion, it will be the only world they know.

Open captions:

>> *Every day, I think about having a normal life. I want to have a small business or a job to do. But I don't know what to do.*

I feel hopeless.

End of clip

In the studio

James: It's not hopeless!

Betty, what is going on in your heart when you see this? What do you want to happen in behalf of those girls and so many like them?

Betty: These precious children! It is really hard for me to put into words what I feel as I listen to their broken hearts, their hopelessness. They have no one to trust.

They feel like their lives have been wasted. They just want a normal life. What would they call "normal"? Safe -- that's what they're talking about. They want a safe life. Somewhere that somebody will show love to them in the right way.

My heart just breaks as I listen to them. I think, God, please deliver them! Well, you know what? We can be a part of that deliverance by reaching out and saying, "It is not hopeless."

God is our hope. Through us God wants to reach out to these precious children that are so trapped and were put in places they never wanted to be. Please join with us.

James: I think that's one reason you watch *LIFE Today*. I think you like the effectiveness of what we do together and what love does. There's not anything that perhaps, is more meaningful than setting captives free. Jesus came to set the captives free.

We have the workers and we have, because of your support, been able to build the escape plan and the refuge and the rescue centers to take care of children before the predators take them captive; to get girls and guys out because they use boys and children too, to get them out and take care of them. So we're asking you to help us rescue lives and restore them, redeem them.

Your gift of \$128 is what it takes for a year to rescue one. We're praying that many of you will help us rescue ten if you can, that's \$1280. There is a level at which you can participate. You may not be able to give \$128 but give toward it. But whatever you can do we're asking you right now to go to LifeToday.org please. Make the gift God put on our heart because he's enabled you to do it and he's given you the concern and compassion to express that love, set people free. Or you can dial the telephone number there that's always there as a prayer line, paid for by love. But you can dial it today and take your bankcard and say, "Here's my gift."

We have some gifts to send you to bless you, to encourage you, and to express our thanks. But you are going to set people free just like those two sisters. Thank you so much for your prayers, for your faithfulness, for your support.

And we're believing God for a miracle of love right now and a miracle to see our land, our nation, supernaturally healed. We're praying for that and trusting. Thank you for your help.

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.

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to save children vulnerable to sex traffickers. You can help rescue those already enslaved and you can restore their lives with hope for a future.

Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their destiny forever. With gifts of \$64 or \$32 we will combine your support with others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of sexual slavery.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you the "Light of the World" scented candle. This beautiful encased in a frosted glass burns with a wonderful scent. Its flame is a reminder of your part in being a light to the world, especially to young women trapped in the darkness of human trafficking. Your gift helps provide them with hope and a way out.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 to help rescue ten children and you may request our beautiful new "Majesty" bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: You're going to love this beautiful, "City set on a hill cannot be hidden." It's a wonderful gift. I think it's one of the nicest things we've ever sent, Betty just to express love; and represents the light we are to be in this world of darkness.

Thank you so much from the bottom of our heart for joining us in prayer for an awakening. We desperately need it. We're believing God for it. Pray for a miracle of godly, wise leadership. Pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on everyone.

Go to the stream daily, would you? Look for beautiful wisdom treasures and voices that you can pass on to give us insight and understanding of the times. Thank you so much for doing that.

Thanks for praying for Betty and for me and the outreaches of life. God bless you.