

3/28/16
Week 14: Spring Mission Feeding
Caleb Kaltenbach

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

James: I don't know what challenges you may face but everyone I talk to seems to face some kind of a challenge. One that has really come to the attention of many people who care, or many people who have been directly impacted in some way with the same sex attraction, the "gay revolution" as they call it, the awakening, transformation, and correction of American and church thinking, some would say, it's very serious.

I had one father, very successful businessman heard me talking about loving everybody no matter where they are. And he stood up and he said, "If you can't love people who have a problem with same sex attraction or the gay issue, you may need one in your family so you learn how to love them."

That really hit home with a lot of people because it seems that sometimes it is hard to love people who are outside what you would call, from your point of view "the norm," either personally you have that position or you say biblically you have that point of view. Then all of the sudden, in the family there is someone who says this is who we are or this is what we're faced with or struggling with and you don't know what to do. If they're in your immediate family or a loved one's family or a neighbor, what do you do?

Well, our guest Caleb had the situation of having parents who were gay. And before the situation was over he was actually being taken to these parades, and then he heard the accusations or the comments of people who would be holding a Christian banner or a sign or a cross but they didn't seem like they liked any of the people and there was a lot of hatred, "God hates fags," "God hates gay," and he's just a little guy.

Well, he is with us and he wants to talk about it and he's written a book that everyone who has read it, it's just come out, says they've never seen anybody handle it better. Sheila Walsh who is on our staff said to me before we came out here, "I think this has been approached the wisest and most effective way I've ever seen."

So Caleb Kaltenbach is here and he pastors a great church out in California. He knows how to deal with this issue and that's why he wrote the book, *Messy Grace*. Would you welcome Caleb to *LIFE Today*?

Caleb, we're glad to have you.

[Applause]

Take us on the journey, Caleb. I appreciate you being here.

Caleb: Thank you for having me.

When I was two years old my parents divorced. They were both university professors. After they divorced they entered into same sex relationships. I didn't know about my dad until later on, right before I got out of college or right after. But my mom was in a 22-monogamous-year relationship with a psychologist named Vera. They moved to Kansas City. As you said, they were activists; joined the local board of directors of GLAD. Took me with them to parties, parades, clubs, camp outs -- you name it, I was there. I saw the ugliness that you're talking about. I even remember and I write about in the book at one point seeing Christians quote unquote "Christians" spray people in a parade with urine and water.

I looked at my mom and I said, "Mom, why are they acting like this?"

She said, "Well, Caleb, they're Christians, and Christians hate gay people."

I remember seeing that enforced over and over again; seeing people die of AIDS and seeing how their Christian families treated them when they died. By the time I got to high school my life was out of control. My hair was down to here and the Lord has taketh away and added other places.

[Laughter]

We lost a bet.

I got invited to a high school Bible study led by a high schooler for high schoolers. So I thought this was a perfect opportunity. I'd go there and pretend to be a Christian and learn about the Bible and then dismantle their faith. I so remember -- I had never walked into a conservative or Evangelical Christian household before -- walking in and seeing pictures of scripture and sheep and lions. I thought to myself I've never seen so many animals in frames. I'm like if I turn Christian do I have to get a sheep picture? Is that part of the deal? Went downstairs and I learned that Jesus was not like the people on the street corner, the people ignoring their children who died of AIDS.

I gave my life to the Lord and then I came out as a Christian to my three gay parents when I was a teenager and they kicked me out because I told them that I believe that God designed sexual intimacy to be expressed between one man and one woman in the context of marriage, which I still believe today. That's how I interpret scripture.

But I also said that a theological catalyst is never conviction to treat somebody less, to devalue somebody. The love of God should drive us to love people more. I ended up going to Bible

college and graduated. Went out to southern California, served at a large church, Shepherd Church for about 11 years and ended up coming out here. And both my parents moved separately of one another to be closer to our family. They started attending my church that I was preaching at even though they knew what I believed. And in the summer of 2013 we moved back to California to go pastor Discovery Church. And two weeks before we moved back both my parents gave their lives to the Lord and they trusted Christ.

[Applause]

I look at it and it's beautiful because they believe in Jesus. They don't believe everything I do, just like we all probably have theological differences. They're not in a same sex relationship. They still feel this attraction. They might slip up but they're not doing anything with it. How does all of that go together? I don't know. God called me never to change somebody myself but to point them to Jesus and the cross. He's much better at life change than I am.

James: Do you believe that attraction is some sort of a bondage that people can be delivered from? I know Betty asked me after we'd visited you just a little while ago, do you believe -- how did you ask it exactly?

Betty: I said well, I believe in deliverance because I know the God I worship has delivered me from things in my life that could have held me back as a Christian, like fear, low self-image, a lot of different things in my life. So I believe in deliverance and so when you deal with this situation, does that come across that there can be deliverance?

Caleb: I had a conversation with a professor at Dallas Seminary named Darrell Bach. We talked about how there are some people that seem to be soft wired and hard wired. There are some people where you can see their family history, you see what happened to them in the past and I believe that their choices to be in a same sex relationship seem to be reflecting that. But then there are some people that I've met and as far as they've told me nothing bad has happened, nothing horrible has happened.

So instead of going out and looking for a suspect, definitely praying for that person, loving that person. People ask me, "Do you believe that people are born that way?"

I say, "I don't know. That's not the right question because I'm not interested in their birthright, I'm interested in what the Bible says, a biblical worldview."

I've had people in my office praying, asking, saying, "I've prayed, I've gone to counseling, I've read the Bible, I've worshipped, I've done all these things and yet God hasn't removed this struggle for me."

I say to them the most profound theological thing I can. I say, "I don't know."

But I do know this. Paul cried out for his thorn to be removed three times and God said, "No, it teaches you to rely on my grace."

I told them, "I have plenty of unanswered prayers but we need to be faithful to God no matter what."

James: So in other words, that relationship is not biblically approved; right? Same sex?

Caleb: No. God designed sexual intimacy for the expression in marriage between a man and a woman.

James: A male and a female.

Caleb: Anything outside of heterosexual intimacy and marriage, even if it is heterosexual affair outside of marriage, sleeping together before you're married, that's outside of God's design.

James: And I think all of us have various struggles in our lives that we may struggle with over a period of time or maybe our entire life but we realize it is a struggle because we realize that there is something there that God says, "I can enable you to overcome" or you can reach a point where that's no longer pulling you down and it may be a long battle but you've got a standard.

Now what I try to say to people is we never move God's standard of truth to accommodate our failure or our misdeeds, our sins or our opinion. We seek to keep the standard in its right place pointing people to it.

I think people can struggle with a lot of things, still experience the love of God, still be seeking to be faithful to God but you still don't approve something that the Bible obviously disapproves of. Are you comfortable with that statement?

Caleb: Absolutely. I think there is a huge difference between acceptance and approval. I think that we should accept anybody because our love for people should never depend on them, it should depend on God. That's what Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-48. He said, "Hey, if you love only those who love you, what reward will you get? Don't even tax collectors do that?"

So my love for other people is based on God's love for me. However, that doesn't mean that I approve of every choice that somebody makes; like the choice to be in a same sex relationship, the choice to cheat on taxes.

James: Your choice to live in a heterosexual relationship sexually without being married.

Caleb: So really what you're talking about is what I talk about in this book and I think it speaks a little bit to what you're talking about with deliverance. Because even though God sometimes may allow the struggle, we still need to be delivered from this feeling to have to give in all the time. We need to rely on his power. There is a tension there; there is a healthy tension between grace and truth.

Some people are just on the side of grace over here like this rubber band. If you hold the rubber band by one side its flimsy, it has no power. And so people are just on the side of truth. And if you hold it by this end it's flimsy, there is no power. But John chapter one, 14, 17 say that Jesus came full of both grace and truth. So if we follow Jesus' model, look where the tension is. If I say I'm about grace and truth, the tension is in the middle and that's where the power is.

By the way, when it comes to loving people in grace and truth and living in the tension, we already do it in our faith. We believe in one God, but the Trinity. We believe Jesus is fully God and fully human. The Bible is written by God and people. God is sovereign but he gives us responsibility. So there is a healthy tension. You can't sacrifice what God says in his Word but you can never sacrifice love either. I'm sure you would agree.

James: One hundred percent agree. I think the only way you're going to see people set free is the encounter that love makes possible. There's a grace invitation when you see it being extended in love that causes people to respond.

One of the things you pointed out when we were just visiting a little bit was that a lot of people in whatever area, let's say, they're struggling in, they have a feeling of loneliness that they're going to be cut off. You said people who are struggling with any issue, if they feel like they're not going to be loved or accepted they have a tendency then to try to find comfort or some kind of a satisfaction, perhaps, even in a relationship that's not healthy, and they think if others won't love them they'll never come that way.

So there is something I think that the church puts on people that makes them feel unaccepted, unloved, and like you could never be accepted. They're living with this anxiety of just loneliness and being cut off. Is that a fact?

Caleb: I believe so. Somebody who says, "I'm not going to give in to same sex desires, I'm going to be celibate," it's different than a heterosexual person saying that they're going to be celibate. Because a heterosexual person, there is always a chance that they'll meet somebody. But somebody who is same sex attracted, unless they're delivered in some way shape or form, that will never happen for them. So that's something that we have to respect and understand. That's a big decision.

I remember a conversation I had with my mother one time. I don't know how it came up. Nobody ever wants to have this conversation with their mom. I didn't bring it up.

[Laughter]

But my mom, just so you know my mom said, "Caleb, the last several years of my relationship with Vera, we were not intimate."

Again, nobody wants to hear that from their mom. But I remember, I looked at my mom and this is where she came to Christ. I said, "So you're not a lesbian anymore." She said, "Well, sure

I am. We haven't been intimate in years but that's my community, those are my people. I have relationships and acceptance, and part of a cause and a movement."

I said, 'Mom, you just described the church.'

She said, "No, I didn't. Why in the world would I go somewhere that would make me feel less about myself?"

And it really dawned on me at that point that it's all about identity more than anything. A sexual intimacy part of it? Yeah. But I've met my fair share of couples who are same sex couples who aren't even intimate anymore and yet that's how they identify themselves.

So really, I think the core issue of our time today, the issue that we need to be tackling as a culture is really identity. You see it with Bruce Jenner to Caitlyn Jenner, you see it with the lady from the N.W.A.C.P. in the northwest, who says, "Even though I'm Caucasian I so identify as African American." I really believe that there is a huge identity crisis. And what we learn from scripture is we were created by God for God to be identified by God. I think that America, I think the whole world needs to understand that.

So the average person, I think who identifies as L.G.B.T. wouldn't look at it as a struggle, even though I think that's a correct word. They would say, "No, this is my identity." So how do we get them to shift it over to Jesus? And I would say this. That unless we love them, Jesus said in John 13:35, that we were talking about earlier, Jesus said, "Hey, the world will know you are my disciples by how you love one another."

I don't know that other people will really listen to what we say about holy living and how the Bible calls us to holy living if they don't know that we love them. I think if people know that we care, they will listen more than we ever give credit for.

James: Well, Betty and I have actually invited people who tell us they are gay or lesbian or whatever, to come and sit with us and that we would just be pleased to sit -- we usually sit down kind of near the front at Gateway Church and kind of over to the side, but near the front. We said, "You just come sit with us." And we meant it.

I can simply say to any person that, James, you wouldn't approve of what we are. I love you very deeply -- care very much. And I would want you to have the same love for me if you knew I was struggling with something. Everything we struggle with in life, I think we long to have somebody that would be willing to walk it out.

Dennis Jernigan who was homosexual and actually had, he's a great Psalmist and songwriter and a great praise leader. He actually had a counselor at the Baptist school he was in, university, put a move on him to have sex with him when he went for counseling. So that's how messed up his situation was. But a man walked into his life and said, "Dennis, I know what your struggle with. I don't care how long it takes I'm going to walk with you. Until you win I'll never leave you." And it changed Dennis's life. He's married and has nine or ten children.

Betty: Nine children.

James: That's pretty good deliverance right there you would have to say. He is a great songwriter. But I think what that man said to him, "I know who you are; I know what's going on. I love you. I won't leave you. I'm going to walk through this 'til you win." Is that a good approach?

Caleb: Absolutely! Because that's God's approach with us. I think that's what he says in Isaiah 43, one and two. He says, "Hey, you're going to go through the fire, you're going to go through the water, I'm going to go with you. I won't always rescue you but I'm going to be there with you."

James: And you've written this to help people who have the battle, somebody in their family, the struggle let's say, whatever you want to talk it or just the issue, or people who know someone, and you feel like this is something God will use to really help them walk through it and be a light and a blessing to others?

Caleb: I do. I think hopefully it will help heal families.

James: Well, Sheila Walsh, she is sitting up here in the audience. She is part of the *LIFE Outreach* team now and *LIFE Today*. Sheila said, "This is the best I've ever read or seen to help people who in some way in their family fight this battle."

Would you say thanks to Caleb for being so open and honest and full of love and offering us grace? The grace that will reach any of us in our mess because God loves us where we are.

I want you if you would do something that you've told us that you find incredible joy in. I want you to look in and I want you to see a woman's heart, I want you to hear her heart. And some of you as women, and sensitive people as men, you can feel what's in her heart. She's got a challenge but you really have the answer. I want you to watch carefully and prayerfully and see if you don't get excited about what love can do in response to this. Watch.

On the mission field

Open captions:

>> My name is Paulina. Life is bad for me because I have lost 5 children. The lack of food here has become a big problem. Yesterday my children had only one bowl of porridge to share. My kids have not had anything to eat today.

Announcer: In Africa, the rainy season is often anything but. Thirsty crops begin to fail and the first victims are the children.

Open captions:

>> This is all the food that I have for my family.

Announcer: Paulina has been here before. Not enough food for a single person -- much less her entire family. And her desperation draws up the grief of children lost because she knows she could face it again.

Open captions:

>> I feel so much pain for my children who have died. When my children were hungry, I had no food so they became weak. As the mother, it was hard that I could not do anything to help.

Announcer: Her future unknown, Paulina fights hopelessness and persists in prayer that a miracle will come. Will you be that miracle today?

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty, when you see that precious mother and you see the little bitty meager amounts of food, and there she is trying to sweep her little dirt floor. I can promise you if she found any morsel of food she would collect it.

By the way, these people who appear to be so poor, and they are, they actually try to keep their meager things neat. Those are precious mothers. When you hear her heart cry what happens in your heart as you look out at our viewers and realize we could feed those children, and we've been able to do it, what do you want to happen?

Betty: We have fed many of the children that we've asked you to help us with -- and we couldn't do it without your help -- to feed these children. The mothers, it just breaks my heart. I can't even imagine losing five children. We've lost one and that hurts bad enough. So the heartache of that mother has to be enormous.

She's got children left as you could see and she doesn't want them to die like the others have died. She just needs food for them. She has nowhere to turn. She is down to that little bit in that can. I can't even imagine.

But we can reach out in love and hope and help these mothers that are so desperate for their children, they just need food. It is a simple solution to that. Let's join together and let's get the food to them for her precious babies!

James: And it is something we've been doing for more than 20 years and saving millions of lives. And she referenced a little bowl of porridge we had already gotten to her.

So there will be a feeding area set up right there for that little baby that you saw, precious little child. When I look at them, I feel like Jesus wants to pick them up and I think we're his arms to pick them up. I think we're his hands. I think we express the love that's in his heart.

And the missionaries are there. They've planted their lives in the midst of pain and suffering. But they have planted their lives there because there is hope that love offers. They have that hope in their heart, their hands are anxious to help but we're the ones that give the missionaries and relief workers the food to distribute, the care that they need to set up the feeding lines, the little heat-resistant bowls that our viewers said we want those children to have.

So what we're asking you to do right now and we come to the just a few times a year to say would you help us take care of it, this time 400,000 little children like the one you just saw there with that precious mother? Would you help us?

Let me tell you how wonderfully God answers prayer. A group of our friends said we so believe in this that you tell the viewers that if they'll help, we're going to match the gift that they give to reach 50,000 of those children. So if you make a gift we'll match it, which means that \$30, \$50, or \$100 which feeds three, five or ten, well, you make one of those gifts and suddenly, the \$30 takes care of six, and the \$50 takes care of 10. It doubles everything that you're doing. Now you're not just caring for ten with that \$100 gift but 20. \$1,000 doesn't just care for 100 but now 200 -- \$1,000 gift will do that. It will multiply it immediately.

So would you simply dial the number there? Or go to LifeToday.org and take your bankcard and make the best gift you can? Thank you so much for doing that.

Father, I pray every person that saw that mother and heard her heart cry will become an answer to the heart cry of hundreds of thousands of mothers in behalf of their precious children; in Jesus' name.

LifeToday.org or dial the number, use your bankcard, would you please, like a check? If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* because that's what you're giving. But call us and tell us what you're sending.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you in behalf of those mothers and those children. Thank you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished areas of Angola, Africa, families are suffering, crops have failed. There is no food. And those hit the hardest are the children.

In response to this crisis, Life Outreach has received a 50,000 children challenge that with your help will feed and minister to 100,000 children over the next few months. With previous food reserves gone and Angola facing a severe food shortage due to crop failure, this challenge could not have come at a better time to help replenish

supplies for the feeding programs touching the lives of children across Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan.

The 50,000 children challenge means more children can be saved and your gift will have a double-impact helping to feed twice as many children. Your gift of \$30 to help feed three children will now be doubled to help feed six children! Gifts of \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save ten. And gifts of \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed and care for 20 children.

With a gift of \$1,000 or more you can double your impact to help feed 200 children. And also request the "Majesty" bronze sculpture featuring a beautiful buck in regal stance reflecting God's presence and majesty in all the earth!

Please call the number seen here, write LIFE, or go online today to LifeToday.org and make your life-saving, double-impact gift today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: I hope many of you will ask for "Majesty," the beautiful bronze.

What we've shared today as Caleb calls it, *Messy Grace*, I think you can find the answer you may be looking for if you feel like maybe I'm trapped or this is just who I am, but I'd like to hear about love and grace. Or you say, "I want to know how to deal with someone in my family, how to love them, how to reach out appropriately so they'll know they're loved wherever they are, in their battle, in their challenge, in their area of need or pain or hurt." I think it will be a blessing. You simply help us give someone some of that food that will change their life and say, "Hey, how about sending me something to just help me reach out?" We'll be glad to do that. It is in the bookstores. You might point people to it or online. But if you'd like to have it, we'll be so glad to send it to you so you can share this wonderful grace.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks again to Caleb? God bless your parents. God bless your church family and all you do, Caleb.

Thank all of you for watching *LIFE Today*. Thanks for sharing life. Let's share it every day, somewhere and in some way.