

8/25/16
Week 35: WFL
Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh
Clayton King

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. My co-host today is Miss Sheila Walsh.

Sheila, good to have you as always.

Sheila: Greetings, earth people!

Randy: We have a very strong person with us today who discovered that sometimes you have to be weak. If you're not going to be weak on your own, life might beat you down a little bit, right?

Sheila: Honestly, I have to say I'm so excited about this guest and about his book. So without further ado, will you please help us welcome Clayton King? Welcome sir!

Clayton: Thanks for having me.

Randy: All the way from South Carolina.

Sheila: One of the things you said when we were having dinner was you talked about the impact that James has had on your life; that it really is significant for you to be in this studio. I'd love you to just say a little bit about that because that really touched me.

Clayton: When we pulled in the parking lot today from the hotel, I sensed the Holy Spirit. It kind of got all over me, I guess is the best way to put it.

When I was 14 I gave my life to Christ. The night that I was saved I sensed God calling me to ministry. I had never wanted to be a preacher. The thought never crossed my mind; never even dawned on me that I would go into ministry. So almost immediately after my salvation experience God began to open doors for me to preach in churches and prisons and youth groups.

James Robison, your dad had a program, a 30 show that came on our local religious channel every afternoon, every evening about 6:30. So my dad would come home, my mom would fix dinner for the family. We would eat and then we would go in the den and we would turn on the TV and we would watch your dad preach. I didn't know at the time what God was doing in my life. I was just an eighth grader, but I was watching your dad anointed as this great evangelist and this great communicator and that D.N.A. was being formed in me.

So for me to sit here with his son, with you and to be able to be in a studio that represents the legacy of your mom and your dad is almost too much for me to even comprehend. I really am like a kid on Christmas. I cannot believe I'm sitting here right now.

Randy: Well, we're thrilled to have you. You kind of walked down a lot of the path that he walked down. You've spoken in prisons and all sorts of places. You are on staff at a church but you are an evangelist at heart.

Clayton: That's right. I'm the teaching pastor at a church called New Springs, one of the largest churches in the country. But I'm an evangelist by calling and I travel several hundred days a year; started when I was 14, been 29 years now and I guess right now 38 countries and 45 states that God has allowed me to travel in and to preach in and to see people saved.

I've really modeled, (I was telling you guys this backstage,) I've modeled much of our ministry, I run a large non-profit ministry and a summer camp called Crossroads for teenagers; we've modeled our structure, we've modeled the way that we try to handle money, everything after your dad and after Billy Graham. Those are the two men that God put in my life besides my own father and my pastor growing up those two men have been probably the biggest influences in my life as a minister of the gospel.

Randy: That's quite a compliment.

Sheila: Yeah! That will mean a lot to your dad.

I got a chance to read your book and I have to say first of all you're a great writer and I love -- I read all the time. You're a really gifted writer. But I find myself asking, what compelled you to revisit such a painful place? Because some of the stuff you talk about in here is pretty tough.

Clayton: That's my 13th book but I tell people it's the first one that I wrote in blood. I wrote it on my own. To answer your question, the reason I wrote the book was I just could not get away from this sense that God wanted me to tell the story.

After having written the book, I realized that it was cathartic for me, it was healing for me, but it wasn't for me. I thought I was writing the book as sort of a way to work out this painful experience I went through over a dozen years but in reality I was writing the book for other people. So what I felt like is the Lord told me to tell my story.

The story is essentially this. I lost nine family members in 12 years. I preached every one of their funerals. I was averaging a funeral every 16 months for 12 years. So to give you a concept of that time frame, imagine a child that begins elementary school as a first grader. Now fast forward to the day that he or she graduates from high school, that's 12 years. In that 12-year period I preached a funeral of a close family member every 16 months on average. My mother dropped dead of a heart attack in November of 2010 while I was in another country. And then 18 months later, my father died and I preached his funeral on Father's Day.

So for the first time in my life after preaching all these funerals and going through all the grief and asking the tough questions, questions like, "God, I still believe in you and I still love you but do you really love me?" Tough questions like, "Am I the common denominator? -- Because all of these people are connected to me. So am I doing something wrong?" Of course, that sounds silly now but in the middle of a situation like that you ask tough questions.

So when it was all said and done, my thought was okay, nine people dead in 12 years. The funerals are over, maybe it will stop for a little while. I can finally get over this. But in reality, we don't get over hard times. We get through them by God's grace. So I had to write that book because if I did not externalize what I was feeling, it was going to kill me. Whenever we hurt, whenever bad things happen, things that we're not prepared for, they show us how weak we really are.

Everybody is going to cheat somehow to make it through the hard times in life you're going to go somewhere for your grace, for your strength, for your stamina and Jesus was mine. But the temptation for me was to bottle it up. So when the Lord told me to not bottle it up but to dig it up, I said, "Okay, Lord I'll do it because I want to obey. But I'm going to trust that you're going to do something good out of this bad thing."

Here's what I've learned. God is so good, he can bring a good result from a bad thing. There's really no other power known to the human race that can do that. So when I dredged up all of those emotions and all that pain and all those feelings I didn't realize at the time I was doing it so that other people could be comforted with the same comfort I had received from the Lord when I was going through such a difficult situation.

Sheila: What would you say if somebody is watching right now and they're not on the other side? They're right in the middle of something that is devastating; what would you say to them?

Clayton: I'll quote Winston Churchill. Other than Jesus, I think the most quotable person in human history, Winston Churchill said, "If you ever find yourself going through hell, by all means keep going."

What we tend to do is when we find ourselves -- I think there is a country song that has kind of spun off of that. It's good theology even though it didn't come from the Bible. But what we tend to do is when we are in the middle of a very difficult season in life, whether it is the effects of an abortion, depression, discouragement, alcoholism, some sort of addiction, a divorce, a health issue, financial difficulty, you name it, we tend to pitch our tent in the middle of the hell we're living through. But what we have to do is keep moving. Forward momentum is so important.

So there were moments when I was going through this deep dark season of depression and discouragement where I would just pray: God get me through the next hour. I wasn't even thinking about my kids growing up, I wasn't thinking about turning 40. I was just thinking, if you can just get me through the next hour without a nervous breakdown, then God that will be a win.

So that would be my word. Look to God because of all of the places you can go in hard times there is no one as big or as strong or as smart as God, and there is no one that understands your struggle and there is no one that understands your pain more than Jesus because Jesus suffered. He suffered greatly. As a matter of fact, he took the entire weight of the sin and the failures of the entire world on himself. When he died on the cross in our place he wasn't just taking away the penalty of our sin, he was taking away the shame and the guilt and the regret.

Isaiah prophesied 700 years before Jesus was even born that Jesus was a man of sorrows, who was well acquainted with grief, and of course, Jesus lived that out. So if anybody understands what it's like to be depressed and discouraged, to go through grief and pain and terrible, terrible days, Jesus understands.

Randy: Listening to you out here, it sounds like you've worked through things and you've really come to a good place. You sound a little bit like someone who can preach. You contrast your public self with the man who had to go take care of his father as he was close to death's door. What did you discover during that very difficult time?

Clayton: I discovered that I was never as strong as I thought I was, and that God was way stronger than I ever dreamed he was. There were a couple of moments and I tell these stories in the book because when I wrote the book, I wanted the book to be a story of hope. It is not a depressing story. It's not a sad story. People that read the book tell me two things. They tell me they finish it; which as an author, I want people to finish the books I write, that's a compliment

for a writer. And they tell me that they laughed and cried in the same moment or in the same chapter, in the same moment.

So there were a couple of moments that God revealed to me what he could do in my weakness. So if I could encapsulate everything, I parallel my story of weakness with Paul's thorn in the flesh. When Paul says in Second Corinthians 12:7-10: I pleaded with God three times to take away my thorn in the flesh but all three times God said, "No. There was a greater purpose in the pain."

We don't like pain. But what pain does is it purifies our motives, and it testifies to God's grace. And sometimes it really helps us to focus on what matters in life. So I decided if my weakness won't go away, it might as well go to work.

Sheila: That's good!

Clayton: And weakness isn't going to go away. We're all weak. In some way, shape, or form we have real weakness, every one of us. So my weakness was not going to go away. So what I did is I put it to work and I let that weakness be the way that God worked in me.

The moments that I remember the most and I tell these stories in the book is the day I took my children to see my dad before he passed away. He was in a nursing home. He couldn't eat. The neuropathy was so bad he couldn't hold a coffee cup. He was on dialysis every other day. He was having small heart attacks. They knew he wasn't going to live much longer.

It was a horrible day. My dad had a panic attack while I was there. He fell and busted his knee wide open. He was a free bleeder because of his heart medication. So I took my children away from that situation and I cried all the way home, an hour and a half.

Randy: In front of your kids.

Clayton: In front of my kids. They were in the back seat. It was God's grace that they put on their headphones and their headphones allowed them to -- they were watching a movie on the DVD player. As soon as they put their headphones on in the parking lot, I lost it. I just began to weep and cry.

Whenever we pulled into the parking lot an hour and a half later at the Y.M.C.A. and they took their headphones off I was still weeping. When they noticed how broken I was, my seven year old and my ten year old, Jacob and Joseph, from the back seat reached up and laid their hands on my two shoulders and they began to pray out loud for me in the Honda Pilot. For the first

time in my life, I think I really experienced what it meant when Paul said, "God's strength is made perfect in our weakness." Their prayers gave me the strength to make it.

Then the other moment where I felt God lift me up was when I walked in the room where my father's dead body was. I had stepped away from him for a little while. He died while I was away and I'd promised him I'd stay with him until he died. I left his side and when I came back he was gone. I fell down on my knees beside his bed. I just began to cry and weep. I'm an adopted child. My mom and my dad were both dead before I turned 40. I felt like an orphan. I was screaming out to God in my weakness. I'm an orphan! What am I going to do? My mom and dad are gone. My dad is dead. My dad is dead. My dad is dead.

I heard the Holy Spirit say very clearly to me, "But you're not. And if you're not dead I'm not done." And I've held on to that. I'm not dead so God is not done with me.

So in telling the story and writing the book of *Stronger*, what I'm really doing is I'm baring my scars because my scars tell my story. My scars testify that I survived and my scars show people you can survive too. Every scar tells a story and every story, if we'll give it to God, can be used for his glory to make other people stronger.

Sheila: I love the way in the book you talk about the reality that joy and sorrow so often walk hand in hand. I think in the Christian life we want God to make everything better or we might be thinking well, I'm going through a dark season. One of the things that I got from your book is the way that you have learned to worship in the midst of the storm before you even begin to see the dawn break, knowing that because of who God is. That is the thing that I took away from your book. It's not that you suddenly got stronger. It's that our greatest strength is realizing how weak we actually are, which means we can completely lean on Christ.

Clayton: Worship was the only thing that got me through some of those days. I'd have to make myself when I just wanted to panic and give up, I would make myself sing old hymns. I'd make myself sing a chorus of a Hillsong or Elevation worship song. I would do whatever it took just to distract my mind from the hopelessness of my situation.

I learned this. That God's promises are true, but when God makes a promise, we want to fast forward to the pay off. That's what we want -- we want the pay off. I want the streets of gold, I want resurrection. I want health and wealth and prosperity. But when God makes a promise, before we can get to the pay off, we have to go through this thing called "the process." The process is filled with pain. But the process is the point.

This morning I was in the gym at 5:30. And the reason why I went to the gym at 5:30 this morning was to break down my muscles so that they could be broken and built back up.

Cardiologists tell you, if you have a weak heart you've got to push your heart to the limit so that that heart rate can get up, so that your heart rate can be strengthened.

The same reason I go to the gym to break down a muscle to build it back up is the same work the Holy Spirit does in us. The things that break us are the things that make us. And the things that break us are the things that bring us closer to God. I would never want to repeat what I went through but I wouldn't trade it for the world because I love Jesus more now than I've ever loved him. I used to pray because I was supposed to, now I pray for survival. I realize that Jesus, to me, became real in my brokenness and my weakness, because we don't realize Jesus is all we need until Jesus is all we have.

Sheila: I'm wondering too how that has impacted -- the suffering that you have gone through that you wouldn't have chosen, that's got to have impacted the effectiveness of your ministry because there is an empathy that you now have for other people who are struggling that unless you had gone through that you wouldn't have that.

Clayton: I'm a lot more patient now.

Randy: You've been sharing this message for a few months now. How is it impacting people? Or how is God bringing that back to you?

Clayton: It's a really cool story. I radically -- I released the book on Father's Day, which was three years to the day that I buried my dad. It's the message that I've been preaching exclusively. With the churches I go to, the conferences, the events, the rallies, the crusades. And since I began preaching this message on Father's Day, which was back in June, I've seen somewhere between 16,000-17,000 people respond to the gospel by receiving Christ and repenting of their sin.

And it is not because I'm a good preacher. It's not because I've got a great story. It's because God is in my story. It is because the power of the gospel is stronger than our greatest weakness and our greatest times of brokenness. So when I told the Lord two years ago, "I'll write this book but I hope you use it to help a lot of people," he has and he still is.

Randy: Can we give the book to some people, maybe today?

Sheila: I think that will be a fantastic idea! There are some things that we would maybe like you to join with us because together we are stronger. When you can help us do some things we're going to tell you about, then we're going to make this book available to you.

Randy: We're in the middle of Water for Life. That's our outreach where we drill water wells around the world. You have an opportunity here to help some people who have gone through a lot of the heartache, certainly like Clayton understands, but I think even more tragic in some respects. Take a look, if you will, at some people that we are able to impact and who need our help. Open your hearts as you open your eyes and just hear their story, and then I want to tell you how you can make a huge difference. Watch this with us.

On the mission field

Announcer: How can she forget the loss of a child? Then another? A third? And a fourth?

Open Captions:

>> When my kids were born, they were healthy. But then our bad water caused vomiting, weakness, and diarrhea. And even though we took them to the hospital, my children died. Our village gets water from here, but it's making us all sick. Because of this water, my children died.

I have felt so bad over the loss of my children, I have at times spent a month without eating. Can you imagine losing one child, then another, then another, and another...

Announcer: Day after day, she is haunted by her loss. Her time with her four children was cut tragically short. Reflections of them is all she has left.

Open Captions:

>> It's hard to cope with this life.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I cannot imagine what that is like. I only have one son and we went through a thing with Christian at one point when he was three years old and we thought we were going to lose him. And honestly, I thought I was going to lose my mind.

I cannot imagine what it's like as a mom to bury not just one child but two children, three children, four children -- all for something as simple as you can't give them clean water.

The thing I love about being part of this family here is we can change that. Some of you can do a lot and that's awesome! And some of you can do a little, and that's fantastic! But the truth is, every one of us can do something. I don't care if it is going to find that jar of coins that you've

kept and take it and get some money to help. But to be able to say to a mom like that... we met these moms and their prayer is: Will someone in this world hear my prayer?

God has made it possible for you and I to be the answer to this prayer. That's all she wants. She is not asking for something fancy. She just wants to be able to give her children clean water. And we can do it, Randy.

Randy: There are mothers, for some obviously, it is too late and that's tragic but there are so many more that are right on the edge. We need to get there. We need to get there with our drilling rigs. We do the heavy duty wells. These things last like over 70 years. They give water on an average of 1,000 people in a village. These are big time heavy duty rigs and wells that we're putting in. But it does cost some money: \$4800 is the average price for these. We want to do 500 wells this year alone around the world, over 15 countries. We can only do it with you -- with your help.

Some of you can drill a whole well. Somebody might be able to drill two or three and I would say do it! Do it now! But all of us can do something.

You know, Sheila, the story of the widow's mite I think is so critical in a situation like this because I don't know if somebody is out there going, "Man, I wish I could drill a whole well!" But you can't. But you can do something. It is your heart that God looks at; it is not the amount. Yes, \$48 will provide water to ten people for a lifetime. But it's not the \$48 I think God's pressing on you, it is the obedience. It is the heart for giving. It is the heart for reaching out to a hurting world and making a difference, in Jesus' name.

You can do it. You can do it with us. I'm inviting you to go to the phones, to go to the web site right now and participate. You can have that impact. You can change a life. Join us today. Go to the phones.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children are forced to make a dreadful choice: Drink 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 proven demonstrations of God's love today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today you can help drill 500 water wells in remote villages in over 15 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. And \$144 will help provide fresh water for 30 people for a lifetime!

Additionally, just over \$378,000 is needed to replace an old and failing drilling rig in Africa. Please consider an additional gift of \$100 or more to get a desperately needed new rig in place as soon as possible.

With your gift we'll send you *The Stream*, a powerful new book by James Robison that charts a clear path for your personal revival and a spiritual revolution.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the "Promises of God" coffee mugs.

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 "Majesty" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

James: This mother has four children. Last summer a year ago, they had an outbreak of intestinal disease from contaminated water. Two of her children got very, very sick.

Now she's got a little baby just a few months old and this baby is living on her mother's milk, this baby is nursing. Betty, pretty soon this little baby is going to be drinking that water and oftentimes it takes their lives.

Betty: It really does, James. And they can't do anything about it because it's all the water they have. I can't even imagine! This little baby is so precious, so beautiful! Her mama just cuddling her and taking care of her! And she makes little sounds of life. But you know, I don't know how long those little sounds of life will be if we don't do something to help them. We can make the difference by doing the water well, and giving them a fresh cup of water.

James: Do you know, I very deliberately reached out to see if this little girl would take hold of my fingers and in so many ways, little children like this are reaching out to find somebody they can hold onto. I would like you to be one of the hands to reach out and dial the telephone

number and take your bankcard and use it like a check or write a check and make it to Life. Please call us and let us know what you are sending or you can go online and say I want to give life to children like this... keep them healthy.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: Do go to the phones, go to the web site. We can do it, people! We can do it. We just need your help. We've got something special, Sheila.

Sheila: For any gift that you send in, we will send you Clayton's book, *Stronger*. It is really an amazing... Here's the cool thing. You and I get to be missionaries from our own recliner. We can do this together, people!

Randy: We can! Make sure you ask for it when you give a gift today, online, or on the phone, or in the mail, however you do it. We want to get you the book.

Would you just say thank you to Clayton for opening up his heart and putting it into words the things he's been through? We appreciate you!

Most of all, I appreciate you! Thank you for joining us on *LIFE Today*. Be sure to join us every day.