

12/27/16
Week 1: Mission Feeding
James and Betty Robison
Brian Jarrett

James: Hey! Hey! Hey! Wait a minute! You think these people are clapping for me or for Betty? Maybe Betty. A lot of them are clapping for their pastor. They drove all the way -- they drove two miles to get here.

[Laughter]

They drove all the way across the metroplex to get here because they love this person. His name is Brian Jarrett and he can communicate.

You know what Betty? It is a miracle. In some ways it might be a miracle he's alive because he was hurt. He was abused as a very young boy by a distant relative. And somehow he, after responding incorrectly in trying to wash it away with partying and drinking or whatever, he had a head-on collision with the greatest transformer, the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Not religion, not going through some traditional ritual but an encounter with God. It changed his life. And he became a very effective communicator for God, a really gifted anointed preacher and pastor -- but because he was abused. And he first began to talk about that publicly and he was stunned because he thought probably he was one of a very few.

I think he told me, if I remember correctly and he can correct me in a moment if I'm wrong, but the first time he spoke to a group and talked about it and said "if any of you have experienced it" thinking maybe... and there were 300 that rushed forward. And it just stunned him. So he started a ministry to those that have been abused and it has a wonderful name.

Robert Duvall is a very good friend. The year he won the Academy Award he sits in our home and he eats a meal because he said, "I think you folks are full of Jesus and I wanted to see you in person." Lonesome Dove was his favorite role he ever played. That is the name of this ranch and it is a retreat for children and young people that have been abused.

Would you welcome the pastor and the one that has this incredible ministry he is going to talk about, Brian Jarrett, to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

Brian, you are an amazing story. I want you to tell us what you believe the Lord wants you to share with viewers everywhere so that they can be aware but also they can know there is help and there is hope. And anything our viewers or we can do to help you help others let us know.

Brian: Thank you. It's a tremendous privilege to be here with you today. My grandfather who took my mom and I in, in the dysfunction of our family was very conservative, didn't trust a whole lot of people but he watched you guys. So I remember growing up as a kid...

James: He was skeptical of preachers?

Brian: Yes. A lot of preachers; he was a preacher but he was skeptical of a lot of other preachers. Had a very narrow field of who he trusted but he watched you. So he's not with us anymore but this is one of those things he would be excited about.

James: Thank him!

Brian: He raised me and I'm indebted to him because he took my mom and I in. I grew up in a great family; a family that has church roots. And that's what people don't understand that the pain and the abuse comes to average everyday normal families. My family never knew it was going on. When you're abused you hide the abuse. You feel as a kid, it started for me at three, four, five, six, seven, eight years old. All you've got to do is say something but you don't know that because there is something about you that feels dirty, that you feel responsible for.

James: Did you know that something was going on that was not right somehow?

Brian: In my head there was a degree of shame. I had enough consciousness to know this isn't right but in the back of your mind when you're four or five years old, you just assume every kid in the world is experiencing this because this person that's perpetrating is someone your family trusts. So you just -- so part of you is afraid to tell and the other part assumes that this is life.

So when I grew up old enough to realize that wasn't normal you deal with all these kinds of emotions. And that's when I go to the party side and you wind up having, my father wasn't in the picture. He had chased a lot of things in life and left the family. We reconciled before his death and had a wonderful reconciliation because he met Jesus in a powerful way, which restored our relationship.

So with his presence being gone and this happening, I had this need for approval and affirmation. So I excelled in academics because I got praised for it. I chased excellence in

athletics because I got praised for it. But behind the scenes, I said, "yes, ma'am," "no ma'am," "yes, sir" -- I was a very polite guy. Came from a good family but I was very manipulative because I was medicating with addiction and alcohol. I was stealing out of the back of a grocery store where I worked until I almost drowned in my own vomit on July the 4th of 1990. If a friend hadn't turned me over I would have died in my own vomit. It was that day I said, "I'll never do this again -- ever!" And three days I was drunk again. I knew I had a problem.

I had a radical experience with Jesus in November of that year. I knew here but it had never gotten here. But my grandpa's religion, his faith, his experience, I had my own encounter and it changed me. So I started preaching the gospel, I mean immediately because I was asked to tell my story in a youth service. The crowd came out, small town, they came to heckle. Some of them came to hear. Here's the party kid, the football player in a little bitty town and 7500 students showed up that night. Four of my peers gave their heart to Jesus. I wasn't even planning on preaching, I was just telling my story. The youth pastor got up. I wept my way through. I didn't know what the anointing was but I didn't know how to bear it and I wept my way through. Four of my peers gave their heart to Jesus and I was set to be baptized after that service. And they called their parents and they got baptized with me.

So that in a nutshell is what happened in the ministry for us because I was just about to turn 17 and word got out quickly in rural Arkansas that there was a story and a gift and people started having us come and communicate and preach revivals and all those things.

I'm preaching about forgiveness and realize I have unforgiveness in my heart. I have unforgiveness towards my father and unforgiveness towards the man that abused me. I tell people all the time, I learned to forgive but it is a different journey. I don't trust the man that abused me; would never trust him again. My father earned my trust. He spent time with me. But I learned in separate ways how to forgive them.

So through that journey Hailey and I, we married young and started on the circuit preaching youth camps all over the nation. And one night I got the courage to tell my story about abuse publicly. There were 1,000 kids in that youth camp. I didn't know the rules. There weren't as many rules then as there are now about reporting abuse scenarios. And so I gave an altar call out of ignorance and 300 kids responded to the altar because they had lived through the hell of sexual abuse. I can remember crying with those kids realizing, I'll never get to all of them. And then every week, every summer I started telling the story.

James: Seeing the same thing, the same response?

Brian: All over America.

James: Were you shocked because it wasn't just there, it was everywhere.

Brian: Absolutely! And then I started doing research and the research that I did confirmed that the confessed cases are mind-blowing, how many children in ten are abused were proven true in those altar -- and those are the ones that will admit it.

James: Many don't; maybe most don't?

Brian: Like me. I never told anybody until I told my wife Hailey right before we got married because of the shame. Then God began to deal with that unforgiveness.

James: How did she handle that when she found that out? Did it frighten her a little bit?

Brian: No, not at all.

James: Because she saw that it was an obvious change.

Brian: We were young but I knew she was wise beyond her years. Because when I confessed that pain, I confessed a lot of other things that she needed to know that I had done before I came to faith. She looked at me and said, "I understand but when you were baptized, the guy that you're talking about went into the water. I'm marrying the guy that came out."

[Laughter]

James: Isn't that great?

[Applause]

I want to know because I mentioned the Lonesome Dove and I mentioned the ranch and I want to know because I want everybody to hear what you're doing; two reasons, people that need help, I want them to know if it is possible for them to get there. So I want them to have a web site and how to communicate. Second, if they want to help you. Then I want them to know how to help you. So tell us what you're doing now because obviously when you saw it was real you saw you needed something, did you realize you needed to be able to bring them somewhere for a period of time, several days perhaps, in a setting that could begin to rebuild things? Is that what happened?

Brian: I saw these camps that we had all week long for church camp, I saw camps for cancer patients, camps for kids with special needs and I thought, I got 15 minutes, maybe 30 with 300 kids here. I'll never get to all of them. What if I had a whole week with them? And the dream

was born in my heart for a camp dedicated to the kids that had gone through what I'd gone through. I was preaching on dreams one Sunday, "Living the Dream," God put a destiny in you. And on Saturday night the Lord convicted me I had not gone public with that dormant dream in me. So preaching that sermon I got up in front of all these people and said, "This has been my dream." Well, they rallied around Hailey and I and helped make that dream come true. We had that first camp for abused kids seven years ago.

Now Hailey and I thought we would retire from the local church, go out west somewhere, her family is a rodeo family. I'm from a farm family. We would get a ranch and I have an earned doctorate and I want to train rural pastors and help small town Bible --

James: By the way, you do that. You bring pastors together and you do it at that place. Give us a web site. The pastors, somebody said nobody gives us any chance. You have a big church, you want to help them? What's the web site?

Brian: LonesomeDoveTexas.com.

James: And that also tells them about the pastors but also how you can minister to the young people that have been hurt.

Brian: We have two passions at the ranch and they're born out of our past pain growing up in a small town, growing up in a small church. So we minister to small town pastors and small town churches and exploited children. So they are born out of our pain.

We run camps throughout the summer. And obviously, as we start meeting needs now opportunities continue to grow, needs continue to arise. We're in the process of converting an old barn into a chapel. We need more worship space. We're in the process of getting more bunkhouses to reach more kids and all kinds of things.

James: Tell me your goal -- the number?

Brian: Well, we intentionally have no more than 50 kids a week because the trauma of the children that come to us is so great.

Betty: What are the ages?

Brian: Six to twelve. Because the kids act out, right now we focus on six to twelve. They hit us. They spit on us. They cuss us. They do everything because they're reenacting what has been done to them, and we love them through all of that. When the older kids start -- when a 16, 17,

18 year old starts doing that it's a little harder to handle. So we're targeting right now 6-12 year olds and have seen tremendous impact in the last seven years doing that.

But we intentionally hold it to 50. We'll have three adults on site per child. It is the one-on-one attention that transforms their lives. So the answer is not more kids, the answer is more camps. So you don't put 300 kids in a week. You do 50 kids; you just do more weeks.

James: Do you need support for that? Do people have to pay for them to come? Does somebody pay the way or you all provide it?

Brian: We underwrite everything.

James: What do you think it costs per child to come for one of those?

Brian: It's about \$50,000 a week for us to run the camp. So it's about \$1,000 a child and people think that's expensive but --

James: No, it's not. Not for a week when you're dealing with these things.

Brian: I tell you, the thing about it is people don't realize we have today this morning I got up, the vet was there, we have ten horses in our program. The farrier was there and did their shoes the other day and it was spa day for the staff, I said as they were trimming the feet on the horses.

But we had a real estate company donate. We have a dirt track on the camp and we have these quads that we give them rides on. It is an experience of their life. We have a six-acre stock lake and a little pond -- the lake is the fishing lake and then I have a pond fixed up with a feeder. It is a catching lake. Nobody -- you can't fail there. You're always going to catch a fish. These kids have never caught fish in their life. A lot of them come out of poor situations, a lot of them from the inner city. A lot of them are wards of the state. They have been removed from their abusive situations. This is the first -- the first time they've ever touched a horse. The first time they've ever been on a quad. The first time they've ever caught a fish. And their hearts open up and ultimately ask, why are you people doing this for us?

James: I want to again, repeat the web site if they want to know about all that's going on there. What is it?

Brian: LonesomeDoveTexas -- spell out the word Texas.com.

James: And if they wanted to support you, say all right, let us help you with those 50,000 per camp, would they make a check to the same thing?

Brian: I'll say this.

James: I want to know, it's all set up where they give they can get their tax credit.

Brian: Absolutely. The charity that owns the ranch is the Water Tower Network because that's...

James: Is that where they would make it out?

Brian: Yes.

James: Anything else you want to say with our viewers? Betty, anything you wanted to ask him that just came to mind to you?

Betty: Where do you get the children from mostly?

Brian: Right now we have engaged the foster system because that is the greatest area of need. I wasn't a foster child so we want to help people who are not in the foster system as the ministry grows but our biggest influence right now are children that are in the foster system.

We have a mutual friend, Pastor Tommy Barnett, when I was young told me that if you will go after the ones nobody wants God will give you the ones everybody wants. My grandpa told me, "If you'll go after the brokenhearted you'll never be without a job, son. Just go after -- whatever you do, if you'll go after the brokenhearted you'll never be without a job."

James: And that's what he said in that great passage where he talks about setting captives free but he came to bind up the brokenhearted. There is so many reasons we experience it.

Father, I pray for people right now that think nobody noticed but you do. Somehow I wish you would give them a consciousness that you're putting your arms around them, that you actually want them to lay their head over on your shoulder and know they're going to be safe and secure, they're going to be held by unwavering, unconditional, unlimited love -- boundless! Do it, Lord! In Jesus' name.

I believe you sense that. You know what I think our viewers want to do? I think a lot of them are going to go to your web site and want to help you. But I think if you know, you say your granddad appreciated what we do, what we do is the will of God and we literally put the hands

of God into people's lives and put his arms around them and we meet their needs. We actually, the body of Christ, we do what Jesus does. And one of the greatest joys for our viewers is to relieve suffering all over the world, the pain, and give people hope and life.

And our Mission Feeding program is the very first thing, Betty, when we came back from the mission field it is the first thing, and we had to sell a lot of stuff because we didn't know if anybody, I'm talking about the ministry did, all of us, because we didn't know if people would help feed the poor. In our churches, people didn't attend mission conferences or prayer meetings very often. So we come back and start talking about missions, we didn't know. But we saw the need and you know what? You saw it too. And you talk about rise to the occasion, you can put God's arms around a broken world and you not only led millions of people to Christ, you've saved millions of lives. And this is the first thing we did.

I want you to listen. I want you to listen to God as you watch needs your love can totally meet effectively and I think you're going to rejoice to do it.

On the mission field

Sheila: I'm here in what is a small part of a massive grave yard. I've never seen anything like this in my life. But this part I'm standing in, these are all children. And the thing that has touched us as a team so deeply is the way that the parents have tried to honor their children in some way by leaving something on the grave, whether it's just little booties, a little toy that meant something to the child. Some parents have literally, all they had was like an empty water bottle but they just wanted to leave something to say this is my child, and they were loved.

And James, you'll remember being here. You were here and you remember the impact this place had on you. What would horrify you is how it's grown.

James: Dear God! I'm in the midst of a thousand children's graves. [weeping] Most of them didn't have to die. They died, like this little kid here, that didn't have the nutrition. We're told that millions face death right now in Southern Africa, where I'm kneeling in the midst of children's graves.

Sheila: We're on the edge of such an epidemic again. In fact, just behind me they've dug four little fresh graves and there's no children in them yet but they're getting ready because they know they're coming. That's why we're here and that's why we need to do something *now*. We need to be able to go into these villages and feed these children and bring hope to these parents so that these four little holes back here stay empty.

We need your help and we need it now.

End of clip

In the studio

James: That's 25 years ago. Heck, you can tell I was a little different. But I'm really glad that my heart was tender when I was young. Some people think it's just that you get old. No, love never gets old. Compassion never gets old, it gets stronger. And to know, Betty that we stopped so many little children, you did, people like you, from being buried.

Betty: James, you look at all those graves and as I was watching them I thought those shouldn't be there. That should be a place where children are running around and playing instead of parents, mothers burying their children because they don't have enough food for them. They don't have any food. They don't have any resource. That's such a simple solution that we can help with. We can help offer hope and life to these mothers as they try their best to take care of their children, but when they have nothing to work with.

So won't you join us? Won't you give an opportunity to go there and see the children are fed and taken care of through your giving? You are there with your love offering when you give to help get the food to them. Please give.

James: I'm asking you to please, this is our last week right now and we end the year, we go into a new year. I know you can make year-end gifts and sometimes you can make a very large year-end gift.

I know that we've had a miracle challenge by some of our friends to match \$400,000 of what is given. In other words, what you give is doubled. This last week I'm just saying God, would you just pour out your love on those precious people that just need food?

Right now the missionaries tell us that there are several drought areas and that really hits these third-world countries hard and they've set up many new areas. We've got 400,000 that they're trying to head off from death. We have the malnutrition clinics, which is like a last resort. It is so sad. But many times we're able to save them there because of you. So would you ask God right now, "What do you want me to do?" Knowing that \$30, \$50, or \$100 feeds three, five or ten children for the next several months?

We're trying when we get them stabilized then to start feeding them at school, a meal a day, those five days a week for school and it will bring the boys and girls, and it helps their minds be strong and nourished. It costs \$1400 to feed kids in a school for three months. It's a whole

different type of diet. It's not quite as let's say as scientifically analyzed because they've been stabilized. We try to meet the need of the region, what those kids need when they're starving.

So we're asking you right now, this last week, we want to see the greatest outpouring of love possible. If you could make a \$1400 gift it will be doubled, if you make a \$100 gift it will be doubled. Would you make even perhaps a gift that you say, "This is one the largest gifts I've ever made" knowing what it's going to do.

Would you go online, the website you see right there, take your bankcard and use it? Or would you dial the number there and say, "Here's my bankcard" and make the gift? If you want to write a check, make it to LIFE but call us and tell us what you're mailing. Betty, I'd like to be able to tell the missionaries we're going to be able to do more. You can actually go find some more kids that need food. You're not limited. Father, I pray that will happen; in Jesus' name.

Would you right now get up and move to your computer, your laptop, your iPad, however you want to do it or dial the number? Make the gift God puts on your heart knowing it will be doubled. I remind you this is our last week for this emphasis on feeding for the next months. Thank you!

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished villages of Africa children are suffering, desperately in need of life saving food, facing death by starvation.

LIFE's mission feeding program is there, ready now to feed and care for children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With all of our previous reserves gone, and Angola facing a record food shortage due to crop failure, we need to immediately replenish our funding and supplies for our feeding programs.

As an answered prayer, a group of *LIFE's* friends have set a \$400,000 matching gift challenge for mission feeding! This means your gift today could have a double impact! \$30 for three children will be doubled to help feed six children! \$50 to help five children will be doubled to save ten children! And \$100 for ten children will be doubled to help feed 20 children! And don't forget, your \$1400 gift to sponsor a school will now be doubled to feed children in two schools!

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *Without Rival* by author Lisa Bevere. With your double impact gift of \$100 or more please request *The Complete Illustrated Children's Bible*. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1000, which will now be doubled to help feed 200 children and you may request our beautiful Majesty bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I do want to remind you that this is the last week of this emphasis, of course, it's the last week of the year. We've come out of a season of giving and here we are asking you would you not like to do what Jesus did? Give life? Give a future, give a hope? Your gift will be matched, it will be doubled. So please, you may want to consider a special year-end gift; all right?

Some of you are saying you know what? I'm going to help that young man help those kids that have been abused. I'm glad! Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Brian for blessing us? Love you, buddy! You obviously have a great gift!

Brian: Thank you.

James: Thank you for watching. Thank you for being here. Thanks for sharing life.