

3/9/17
Week 11: WFL Last Week
Steven Curtis Chapman

Betty: What an awesome audience tonight! Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: They came to hear me sing. I'm so good.

Betty: I don't think so.

James: See we've got a guy that's won more Grammys than anybody. I told the whole audience...

Betty: That's not you.

James: No.

[Laughter]

Why do you make fun of my singing?

Betty: Well, sometimes truth hurts.

[Laughter]

James: Let me set you back. When we get to heaven, you're going to listen to me sing the first year because I'm flat going to be able to sing in heaven. Do you believe that?

Betty: Yeah. I'm trying to.

[Laughter]

James: It's maybe too big of a miracle.

Steven: Still hard to imagine.

James: Okay. Welcome Steven Curtis Chapman to *LIFE Today*.

[Cheers & Applause]

I'm going to turn this out here. I want one of the cameras to come in and let me see pretty tight here; get a camera that can come on in on him. Now here's what I told him when I held it up. We had dinner before we came out. You may be watching this early in the morning, you may still have on your pajamas. A lot of people say, "I'm glad I can see you -- glad you can't see me." You watch it all through the day. But we tape in the evening and we'd love for you to come and be in one of the tapings.

But I'm saying to Steven and the group that was with us, Franklin Graham happened to be there with us, and I said, "I see glory. I see the glory of God on a father." A father that lost a child. And this is the story; this is his story, the Lord's story in him, "Between heaven and the real world." I've just got to hear him tell me what he's talking about, "the real world."

Okay. Steven, what are you saying here "between heaven and the real world"? What does that mean to you when you say that?

Steven: Well... It's good to be back with you guys. Thank you for what you do. You will appreciate this because you all have been amazing examples of people who have been committed with your life and with the gifts that God has entrusted you to try to bring God's presence and reality into the real world where people are living, where you're living, where we're living.

I have for as long as I can remember, that's what I've wanted to do with the gifts that God's given me, writing songs and playing music. The first song I wrote I was 15-16 years old. I tell the story about growing up in Paducah, Kentucky in a family that didn't -- we grew up in the buckle of the Bible belt so we didn't -- my parents grew up in church but they weren't walking with the Lord. I get to share just a transformation that took place in my family's life and watching God really transform and change my parents; watching us go from a family that were a lot of trouble, a lot of struggles to just my dad who didn't have a father, whenever those troubles would come, we would end up on our knees together and I'd hear my dad pray, "God, I don't know how to do this but I know you can give me wisdom. You're the Father to all fathers. You can show me how to do this."

James: How old were you when you started having that kind of connection with what's going on?

Steven: I was 7-8 years old. But I started writing songs and I realized early on that God -- people would tell me, "God's given you a talent, given you a gift."

James: Was it the writing then at first?

Steven: At first it was just singing. I sang with my family; I grew up singing in church with my family. But I think even then I began to see even as a little boy the impact, the change in the real world that I lived in that had a lot of friction and a lot of -- they were fighting and arguing but I began to see when God's word was brought in, when there was prayer and when seeking God was brought into the middle of that it brought peace into the chaos, it brought purpose into this kind of craziness that was going on in my family.

That began to mark me even as a young man. I began to write songs really with a prayer; that I would kind of understand as time went on that it was this desire to come to know who God is and then to make him known with the gifts he had given me.

So throughout my journey and it's been an amazing, amazing journey and I began to look back on it and see that throughout my life God allowed me to get to know a man that I know you are dear friends with as well, Chuck Colson, who had such an impact in the lives of so many people. I got to go into prisons, into death row cell blocks with him and minister to inmates. I had a chance to go to the jungles of Ecuador where Jim Elliot and Nate Saint and those men were martyred and killed trying to take the gospel. I began to go and see these places and go to these places in my journey in my life that were very much the real world of brokenness and pain. And yet, in those places see how incredibly God had shown up in such a profound way.

I feel like my journey has kind of been that. It's been one foot in both this very broken real world but longing for heaven and trying to use the gifts that God's given me to point people in that direction, to share my journey, realizing that there is a whole lot that's really unfixable. I wanted to call the book Unfixable, actually when I started because I feel like so much of my story I began to realize, even as I was born into my family, my mom and dad were at a place and I share a lot about this, to really -- about to decide to give up on their marriage. It was just not working and my older brother was born and they made this really strange decision to either, they said, "I think we should either get a divorce or what if we have another child? And maybe that will help fix this."

James: You were that fix?

Steven: I was born into that situation. I kind of came riding in. Literally! And obviously, that's very much a double-edged sword because I would realize throughout my life that a whole lot of my struggles have been trying to fix everything that's broken in the world and having to

constantly realize that only God can do that.

As I have gone on in my journey, ultimately and we were together talking about this, the last time we were together, and you guys since we were together have walked this road as well with the ultimate unfixable in my life and the ultimate place of having to trust God with brokenness was losing our little girl Maria and how that, as well as many other chapters in my personal story have brought me to a place to realize that the most profound places that God's shown up in my life have been those places where I can't fix it and I have to -- it's almost like my pastor says we don't really ever cry Abba Father until we first cry "Uncle!" Until we're at a point where we have to just say, "God, I give up. I can't do this. I need you."

But it was standing in Vanderbilt Hospital, having heard the news that our little girl had gone to be with Jesus. And I never really shared this and I share in detail in the book of that experience of standing in the most darkest place I would have never even imagined standing, with my wife with me, determined to pray until my little girl started breathing again. That's when I went in. I knew the news was probably not going to be good. I was determined to go in and pray until they dragged me out of there just to say I'm not leaving until God gives our little girl back to us.

And as my wife put her hand on my back and said, "Sweetheart," just whispered to me that "I think she is with Jesus and we need to let her go." As clearly as we're sitting here talking right now, I was standing at the door of eternity. It is absolutely real and I even spoke to all the doctors, and not because I felt like it was a moment for me to make a statement or be a strong Christian, it was the first thing that came out of me was, "You stand here often as doctors and surgeons and people who experience this, and I hope you don't miss the reality of where you're standing. We're standing at the threshold, the door of heaven, eternity. It's what we were all made for, it's what God created us for. We're all going to stand at this place and my hope is that you would know the one who gives me and my wife hope to know that this story is not over yet. The story is not over yet."

Betty: When you lose someone, a child or a loved one like that, it does make heaven more precious to you. But I feel like at the same time God says, "I want to bring heaven here on earth through you as an example. You're my child and as a charge to you as my child, I want heaven to live in you that it might flow over to others so that they will receive Jesus themselves."

James: Wow! Well, tell us about the song you're going to sing.

Steven: Well, I've written a lot of them over the years but a lot of people have asked me over the years, "What's your favorite song?" That's a common question. I really can't answer that because they come from all the different little moments and chapters. My family and my precious bride, Mary Beth, who by the grace of God, we're 32 years and going strong.

But there is one song that I've always said well, I'll put it like this. If I had just enough breath left in my lungs, if I was told, okay you can sing one more song. Of all the ones you've written, what would it be? It's a song immediately I could answer that with a song that I wrote, it was on my very first album interestingly enough, and it's just carried all through the years that just simply says: My redeemer is faithful and true.

James: Y'all want to hear him sing that about the faithful and true?

Singing:

As I look back on this road of travel
I see so many times He's carried me through
And if there's one thing that I've learned in my life
My redeemer is faithful and true

My redeemer is faithful and true
And everything He has said He will do
And every morning His mercies are new
My redeemer is faithful and true

My heart rejoices when I read the promise
That there's a place that I'm preparing for you
I know some day I'll see my Lord face to face
'Cause my redeemer is faithful and true

My redeemer is faithful and true
And everything He has said He will do
And every morning His mercies are new
My redeemer is faithful and true

And in every situation
He has proved His love for me
When I lack the understanding
He gives me more grace to me

My redeemer is faithful and true
And everything He has said He will do
And every morning His mercies are new
My redeemer is faithful and true

Jesus is faithful and true

[Cheers & Applause]

James: How true. Absolute truth! I think that this is just phenomenal. Your story is. What do you want to happen? If you could say a simple thing, people get the book, and you can get it online, you can get it in the bookstores now -- go get it -- what do you hope happens as they journey with you?

Steven: Well, my life has been marked -- my life of faith has been marked in so many ways by the stories of followers of Jesus, scripture throughout and I'm so thankful that God didn't edit out the messy parts and the ugly parts, the man after God's own heart, David that's a scoundrel -- you read through the story and there's so much hope in that and I'm so thankful God didn't -- well, we're going to edit out those parts so you only get to see the glowing moments.

My hope in sharing this story, because I wrestled a lot with it because I would think, well, how would I want to invite people into this and ask them to take the time to sit down and read this if I'm just going to tell them some stories? Why would I ask somebody to take that journey? It's because step after step God has proven that he is a God who is for and with me. I wouldn't be sitting here having this conversation, there is no way I could sing that song were it not for the grace of God -- every breath, every step.

And hopefully, by taking that journey, sharing those amazing mountains beyond anything I ever imagined, that God does more than we ask or imagine. How does a kid from Paducah, Kentucky get to play on the stage at Carnegie hall -- besides practice, practice, practice, like the joke goes. But by the grace of God.

But then to walk through the darkest valleys and to be able to tell here's how God carried me and carried my family and I. This is the only reason I could share this story. My hope is that those watching will read it will find themselves in those pages and say, "If God is faithful in that part of his story, then God can be faithful in this chapter of my story."

James: You want to say thanks to God for the way he's worked through Steven. Thanks for blessing us.

[Applause]

You really have blessed us. Steven, we're going to do something that blesses people beyond

words. I don't hesitate to ask you to help. Let me show you what your availability to God to become a miracle in somebody's life -- you never thought you could be like a New Testament miracle. You can be. You can be the answer to many mothers' prayer and heart cry. You can be the answer to children having a life they never imagined. Watch.

On the mission field

Announcer: Our mission team sees many heartbreaking needs while on location. So it's especially rewarding to show viewers the profound impact your partnership with us has had in people's lives. Like this dedication of a freshwater well.

Families whose only choice was to drink contaminated water will now have permanent access to clean and safe water for the first time in their lives.

But many live in areas that are simply inaccessible to our drilling rigs.

Ralph: There are places up in the mountain areas especially where they cannot get well drilling rigs. The sources that they get this water from is just like mud puddles. It is full of germs. There is a shot of their water that they would bring to their home to give their children on a daily/weekly basis.

Announcer: Recently though, our missions director was shown a solution to this problem. And we think it is a game changer.

Ralph: *LIFE* has been given an opportunity to bring these water filtration systems into the mountains. This is the part that is going to clean the water into beautiful life-giving water. So you put the filter on, it screws on real easy and within just a few minutes they will have beautiful clean water. They are no longer bringing water that is killing their child, they can get water that brings life to their child.

Announcer: Incredibly, this filter system transforms dirty water into clean water; and clean water is what we want every child to have. Along with drilling freshwater wells, this filter system represents powerful solutions to a problem God is using us all to help solve. One village, one family, and one life at a time.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'll tell you what, now our mission director there, Ralph, okay, these missionaries have compassion and courage, and he knows what that water is. If that filter didn't work, he ain't

drinking that water. He's already seen all the graves. So he didn't have to wonder what that water does. That filter, it works! And it works for a long time. It actually works in most instances for over a year and up to three years, and then we can replace them.

But here's the beauty, Betty. We can give three families one of those filter systems and we actually give them that bucket and that's just awesome. You put old dirty water in it and then you get clean water. Now it takes \$100 -- boy, it's just I say, Lord, I don't like to ask people for \$10 or \$100. I want them to give a whole well. It costs \$4800 for a well. If you can give a well, don't listen to this \$100 deal. Listen to me. But if you've got \$100, you give three families clean water. Betty, that's great! But hey, if you can drill a well, drill a well.

Now, this is what's important. People give \$48 or \$144 and they give ten people water the rest of their life or they give 30 people water the rest of their lives. So think about those numbers. But you say, that \$100 sounds good to me right now. Do it and help us give to three families.

But we have to have 188 wells in crisis areas. The missionaries have said, "This has to be drilled in a matter of weeks, in a matter of months or the whole village could die." So we've got the rigs -- you gave us another rig last year. Thank you! You repaired and replaced one that was down and replaced it so now we're ready to go. But we need a lot of help right now. This is the last week and we've got to have about a million dollars immediately so we go right there.

Father, raise that up.

Betty, what's in your heart to say to our incredible friends?

Betty: I just love it when we can show you what the results of your love is doing. You see the water wells and they pump that water out. We've been there, James, the first time when they see that clean water coming out. Those children get so excited. They even play in it a little bit because they know what a difference it is going to make. And then the possibility of the filters, that's just incredible!

My heart, I feel like I've got a big smile across my heart because it pleases God that we reach out to those that are desperately in need. These mothers that love their children so much and all they need to do is to have fresh clean water for them and that old diseased water that they have to give them until we get help to them is killing their babies.

So please join with us. If you can give toward the well, that's wonderful. If you can give the filters, that's awesome! So please help us!

James: Thank you so much for doing that. Betty, we've been all over the world and

missionaries say, "We know we can ask you, James because your viewers, the viewers of *LIFE Today* care and they like to share life."

We have some gifts for you. One of the most beautiful bronzes I've ever seen; this is the "Determined Eagle" -- determined to soar on the turbulence of the times and the challenges of the day. Eagles seek turbulence to rise higher. They seek the wind currents of jet streams. They are designed for speed they can't generate but they can catch the speed of the wind. We're designed to be carried by a spirit that does what we cannot do apart from God's spirit; in turbulent times we can rise. We're sending this to those of you who will help us drill a well by making a \$1200 gift or more or drill a well to say thank you. But I want all of us to be determined eagles.

Would you reach out today in love and say, "I want to give a well. I'm going to give a portion of a well" \$1200 or \$2400, "pray another person joins me or three join me"? Or would you give \$144 to give 30 people water? Whatever level you can help, would you give three families a filter system? Go online, *LIFE Today*, take your bankcard, dial the number there on the screen. Many are calling in for prayer, but you be persistent, you call and say, "Here's my bankcard number, I want to make the gift God put on my heart." If you write a check make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. Thank you for sharing the love of God. Thank you for giving water for life.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children living in extreme poverty are forced to make a dreadful choice, drink filthy polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

Our teams have recently identified 188 remote villages in southern Africa where children are suffering from contaminated, disease ridden water. The situation is desperate. They need clean disease-free water immediately.

With your gift today you can help drill fresh water wells in remote villages across seven African nations. Your gift of \$24 will provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will provide for ten. \$72 provides for 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift we'll send you Sheila Walsh's devotional, *5 Minutes with Jesus*, a fresh infusion of joy to help you experience a deeper connection with God.

Please consider an additional gift of \$100 to help provide three families with water filtration kits in emergency areas where our rigs cannot reach. And you may request our “No Greater Name” canvas print.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request our beautiful new hand-painted “Determined Eagle” bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: *Living Amazed* is my journey. I believe you will begin to live amazed. It's in the bookstores now.

It is a sure joy to hold this up, this amazing story. Steven, both of our journeys have inspired other people to begin to live amazed. That's when Jesus sent another of the same kind, you can all live amazed. "You can be full of me. The one you've had here in the body now lives in you." You have no idea what God can do with you. This story -- by the way, and this is big. This is a big book. I don't think your publisher's giving it away.

[Laughter]

If you help us drill a well, and we're sending you some gifts we've already told you about because we love you, but if you'd like to have this book, you say, "James, would y'all just send it to me to say thanks for me giving a cup of water?" Yes, we will because we will consider this a spiritual drink of water for you. So if you want it, you help us drill a well and you say, "Would you send me Steven's book?" Sure! Why don't you encourage your friends to go get one online or in the bookstores; will you? Join me saying thanks to God for Steven Curtis.

[Applause]

Announcer: In his new book, *Living Amazed* James Robison shares how divine encounters can change your life. *Living Amazed* – available now at online and retail bookstores!