

3/7/17
Week 11: WFL
James and Betty Robison
Kyle Idleman

James: Y'all are great! You really are. You're very, very special. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

Kyle Idleman is here. He is at Southeast Christian Church; fifth largest church in America. It's in Louisville, Kentucky. It's a Christian church, which all churches ought to be Christian churches.

[Laughter]

They really are full of Jesus. Their pastor is incredible. And Kyle Idleman is our guest, you're going to meet him in a few moments, who wrote a book, *Grace is Greater* -- Greater Than.

Kyle just started speaking for his pastor and now he speaks half the time. Pastor Stone told me, he said, "This is such a special young man." He came here...

By the way, welcome Kyle Idleman back to *LIFE Today*. Good see you.

Kyle: Thank you!

James: Pastor Stone came with you one time here. Why did he come with you?

Kyle: Well, we're partners in what we're doing. In the gospel you see Jesus sending people out people two by two and we have found that to be a really effective way to lead a church is that we do that together. We share that journey together.

James: So you find him to be a pretty good helper?

Kyle: Yeah! Yeah! He's a great encourager.

James: I tell you what, you've become a good helper to him because you've taken some of the load off. Do you sense that God's used you to lighten a great man of God's load just a little bit? Have you seen that?

Kyle: I've seen the value of Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb. I think that's, I think, in large part the way God designed it to be that we share this adventure with brothers in Christ. When you talk about bearing each other's burdens, it becomes much more real when you're in ministry and there are heavy burdens, and you're not carrying that burden alone, that's really important.

James: Did you think he was going to step you up in such a position of carrying the load that you would be speaking to thousands and thousands of people?

Kyle: No. No.

James: You thought maybe a briefcase or something?

Kyle: If God would have told me -- I was planting a church 15 years ago in Los Angeles and if God would have told me I'd be sitting here talking to you about grace then I never would have believed that. I didn't have that kind of vision for my life or for my ministry. That's all God. I like to say he does that, and this ties into grace.

He does that not because of us but he does that in spite of us. It's not that we've earned it. It's not that we're good enough or gifted enough or talented enough but just as Paul talks about, he chooses the weak things of the world to shame the strong. Because in his grace he allows us, even though we don't deserve it and aren't qualified, to be used by him. So yeah, it's a great privilege.

James: When you hear Kyle, Betty, you know how much he loves people and they not only love him, they love Jesus in him and they're drawn to Jesus. You're talking about grace, what comes to your mind in our journey? What do you think about when you think about grace?

Betty: Well, to me grace has many definitions. To me, especially in the loss of our daughter, I needed lots of grace. And it came to me in many forms, in comfort, in tears, because I felt like God wept with me. And in his grace, he picked me up off the floor when I felt like I couldn't get up anymore or I felt alone. I thought, is the world passing by and they don't know my daughter's gone?

But God knew and he was right there with me. And the intimacy that has grown out the loss of our daughter with God has been so special. And I feel like I get up and he surrounds me with his grace. We just have to recognize it and know that it is not anything, like you said, that we deserve but because he is such a loving God and he created us and he loves us so much. He says, "I want to offer my grace to you as you need it."

Kyle: Yeah, God's grace met you in that dark place and you've learned about grace in a way that you never would have otherwise; that in our most desperate moments God's grace meets us there.

That was one of the reasons why I wanted to write this book. There's a lot that's been written on grace as a subject, as an explanation, as a theological or doctrinal works that have been done on grace. But I've heard as a pastor and I've experienced in my life what you just described; that in our moments that we would never want to go through again that God met us there and we experienced his power and his presence in a way that we never would have otherwise. And that is God's grace.

So what I find myself as a pastor desperately wanting to do is explain what you all just experienced in that story and to know that grace is something that as an explainer can't be explained. It has to be experienced. So as I hear stories, I discovered the beauty of God's grace. That it is greater than anything we've done, it's greater than anything that's been done to us by somebody else, and it is greater than any of the pain that we've experienced in this life. When we see that face to face it changes everything.

One of the ways to think about it is the difference between trying to explain a subject like romantic love. If I opened up a textbook and tried to define romantic love I could tell you about neural and chemical reactions in the brain and "here's what happens."

James: How exciting!

[Laughter]

Kyle: Yeah! And you can actually explain that scientifically. But until you have that, until you experience it, it doesn't really make sense. I know that that's true of God's grace. That when we experience it, we understand it in a deeper way.

James: A person with an experience is never at the mercy of a person with an argument. When you've experienced that grace... One of the things that you look at the loss of a beautiful daughter that's so life, every year she lived and that life is still springing up everywhere; and you see that and your heart is broken beyond -- there is no way to explain -- and you say, "God, what do I need to hear or what is it that I can, in some way, be a healing factor to others with a broken heart?" And it hit me with full force because I preached on the freedom that Christ offers us and he came to set captives free. It was his first announcement when he walked into the synagogue. But there's a phrase in that great "set at liberty" and "set the captives free," he said first, "I came to what...? Bind up the broken hearted."

And what happened, I could see a lot of people all over the world that are overlooked. By the way, most of the world feels like nobody noticed. They can't believe God is noticing. God notices you. You are a precious treasure, a gem to him that he wants to polish and you radiate the beauty of his glory. And yet people don't know that. But then there are so many people that have been devastated, just crushed, and they feel like nobody cares.

Love and compassion heals a multiple of wounds and pain and that's what God wants to pour out through us on others so we bind up the broken heart. Sometimes we experience the broken heart before we understand the importance of healing the broken heart; does that make sense?

Kyle: The beauty of grace as we read about in scripture is that it flows. That we receive it and once we receive it we have it to share with other people. As a church or as the body of Christ, if we just receive it but we don't share it, that's not grace. Grace is when we give to other people what God has given to us.

In my experience, almost -- I don't want to say without exception -- but almost without exception when I talk to people who have stayed away, or kind of strayed away from church, it's usually because of something they've done and so guilt and shame are in their way or it is something that has been done to them and anger and bitterness are in their way. And the Bible says in Ephesians four that that gives the devil a foot hold, gives him a staging ground, he can set up camp. So when anger festers in us, when that just builds up in our closet and we don't clean it out, it gives the enemy access to every room in our heart. But grace is what allows us to deal with that anger and with that resentment.

When I grew up, I understood forgiveness in the context of always making things right; that's not a bad thing to teach a child. But if I would get in an argument with my sisters, my parents would say, "You need to make things right." And when I would make things right, then they would forgive me. Or they would make things right I would forgive them. So I grew up kind of making this connection that grace and forgiveness means that you make things right.

What do you do in life when things can't get made right? When somebody can't fix it? When you find yourself in this position that you know what's been done to you, they can't -- they can't make that okay again? And that's forgiveness. That's the grace we have received from God. And so that then allows us to have that kind of grace to give to others.

James: Wow! And he freely offers that, just like he offers wisdom. Betty, what's going on in your heart as you listen to him talk about this?

Betty: Well, I think that not only grace is there for when we lose someone that we love or are so close to us, our child or whatever, but it is also there when we've done things that we feel like

are unforgivable, things that we would be ashamed of, like you said. But grace is in all facets of our life if we just receive it from God.

James: You share a story in the book about a relative that had a secret. Very interesting.

Kyle: I love watching grace collide with somebody's life where they don't even see it coming but it catches them at a certain intersection and their hearts soften and their eyes open.

I got this email one from somebody I never met before, but they said, "Hey, we saw you on TV and we've done some homework." The guy says, "I think you are my cousin. I think your uncle is my biological dad." He said, "I have grown up in this Christian home with two loving parents and I'd like to be able to tell my biological father, (my uncle) I would like to be able to tell him, God has worked for good."

And I didn't know I had a cousin. It was a secret that my uncle had never shared with anyone. And knowing my uncle growing up, he seemed like the kind of guy that was bearing a burden and yet he had gone through a lot of different challenges. And we'd prayed for him over the years again and again. But here he is about age 60 and this secret that he's kept from everyone comes to light. At first he was pretty distraught about that.

James: So why was it a problem to him?

Kyle: Well, you think about, this was when -- it was his high school girlfriend that she had gotten pregnant and she was a pastor's daughter. It was not a safe place to talk about what had happened. So they thought the easiest way to deal with that is to secretly give their son up for adoption and then never tell anybody. But those secrets, they don't go away. Those things follow you.

The beautiful moment happens where they decide to meet for the first time and they meet at my house. We had kind of a mini family reunion at my house in Kentucky and I watched as father and son meet for the first time. His son, my cousin, gives him a gift. He opens it up and it's a watch. I can see that my uncle responds pretty emotionally to this gift. I didn't quite understand what was so significant about it. Then later I looked at that watch and I turned it over and there were two words on the back. And the two words were "pure grace" -- "pure grace."

It changed my uncle's heart. It changed his... The next time I talked to him he told me he loved me on the phone. I don't remember him ever telling me that before. What's remarkable is I get to tell you the story at all. Think about that. For decades he keeps it a secret and now I say, "Can I share this with people?" "Yeah, absolutely! You can tell anybody about this who needs to experience God's grace in their life."

James: A lot of people do, don't they? You appreciate what Kyle is sharing? Kyle, I really appreciate you. In the book, *Grace is Greater*, it's greater than any sin, greater than any failure, greater than any hurt, greater than any need. It is sufficient and it flows freely from the heart of God.

Father, I pray for people right now who just need to feel like, Lord, I was wrong. But now shame has set on them and they're just totally wrong, everything about them is wrong. Lord, I want you to pour out so much grace on them that they will see that you cover all the wrong, all the sin. You don't keep score. You don't keep a record. You blot it all out.

I don't know how individuals, I'm thinking about even as I pray, that I may not know their name but they hurt, they've been crushed, they've been devastated, they've been cut off, and Lord, they just need you to put your arms around them. I know we don't trust feelings but Lord, would you just sort of let them know right now that you're there and that you've got a shoulder for them to lean on.

Lord, for some of them, would you let them find an actual shoulder where somebody will give them a shoulder that is full of your grace. Lord, I really feel prompted to say would you let everyone listening to me right now, hearing this prayer that I'm praying to you, father, would you will let everyone out here say, "God, would you let me be a shoulder for someone with a broken heart? Would you let me hold a broken heart? Would you let me comfort them? Would you let me encourage them? Would you let me help carry their load or lighten their load?"

Lord, hear this prayer and use the people listening to become an answer to the prayer and just let your grace flow freely. And may everyone in need of it receive it freely just as you offer it; in Jesus' name.

I really believe God spoke to you. I really do. I think somehow you're going to sense in the spiritual realm he is not somebody way up there you can't touch but he is touched by every need, every concern you've got. There's not a sparrow that falls to the ground he doesn't notice.

Would you please trust this one? If you've never trusted him say, "Lord, I give my life to you totally. I receive your grace and your forgiveness."

You want someone to pray with you? You call that number, that prayer line and say, "I need this grace. I want it. I trust Jesus. Or join me in prayer." We would be so glad to do it.

Kyle, we know God's pouring grace out. Let me tell you something our viewers love to do. You cannot watch *LIFE Today* -- and I know you know this is true, Betty -- you cannot watch our

program very long and not learn firsthand that if you want to be blessed you become a blessing. If you want to bless God, you bless someone in need of a blessing. You bless others by releasing the love of God through a yielded vessel.

One of the greatest ways we can do this, now think about what Jesus said, "If you give just a cup of water in my name, you won't lose your reward." What is that reward? It could be just the fact that you've saved a life, that you touched someone with love. You don't start measuring -- I wonder what the reward will be? Dismiss that kind of thinking. Let God determine what's coming back your way. You determine what's going out toward those who hurt and you release it.

I want you to watch this because you're going to see what love can do and you're going to see how what you do becomes an answer to a heart cry and a prayer of many people. You are the answer -- you are the miracle for someone right now. Watch closely.

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

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 provided 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: Betty, I rejoice because I believe that our viewers are going to be a miracle. You're going to be somebody's miracle today. Did you ever think you were going to be a miracle -- - like a New Testament miracle? -- An answer to somebody's prayer? That's what you've just been. If you'd like to have the book that Kyle has written, *Grace that's Greater Than whatever*, we'll be glad to send it to you. Here's what we ask you to do. Just give a cup of water. Help us with this. If you'd like to have the book along with the other books we're sending you, ask for this. It is in the bookstores. Tell your friends about it.

Would you thank Kyle Idleman for being here with us?

Kyle: Thank you.

James: Give our regards to the church family. Tell Pastor Stone I said hi! Pastor, I love you and your family. You don't have to wait for another wedding of one of the kids to come out here

and see us. Thank all of you!

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!