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Week 13: Mission: Rescue Life

James and Betty Robison

Tony Evans

James: Hey! Thank you! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have Dr. Evans, Tony Evans back with a book called *Detours: The Unpredictable Path to Your Destiny*.

I'm not even going to begin to read all of the chapter titles; about 16 of them, but they all do start concerning our destiny. The purpose of detours. But he's talking about detours as a part of our destiny. Detours -- not the steady journey. The purpose of detours. I'm going to get right to that one. The pain of detours. The patterns of detours. The purifying of detours. The proof of detours, on and on. And all of them do start with a P and they're all powerful so you could have had powerful detours. You missed that P. I'm going to work with him on his sermon outlines and stuff, try to help him.

[Laughter]

But I'm telling you, Tony Evans is one of my favorite people. He is in my opinion one of the greatest preachers that has ever lived, not just today. How about you welcome Dr. Tony Evans to *LIFE Today*?

[Cheers & Applause]

And I know that Dr. Evans appreciates *LIFE Today* because this is his television ministry. He doesn't have to pay for it.

[Laughter]

This is his own outreach here. Well, Dr. Evans, you know -- and thanks for letting me call you Tony. Man, I love you. This is obviously another great book. I mentioned that first chapter, the purpose of detours, you preached this a series. Have a pretty profound impact that you could see on the congregation?

Dr. Evans: Yeah, it was profound because everybody felt like -- well, almost everybody felt

like they were on a detour; that life was not unfolding as they had planned and as they had hoped. And sometimes on a detour you wonder where is God? I thought I was supposed to be going here and I'm way over there, not knowing that God does that on purpose. Detours are a necessary part of arriving at your destiny.

James: Why do you say that? You act like you're pretty convinced of that. Because it looks to me like we could find a simpler way.

Dr. Evans: Well, it is like going down a highway and you run into something that stops your direct progress. There are a couple of reasons that happens. Number one: There is an accident that you need to work around so they detour you. Something is wrong that needs to get corrected out there.

James: Could be very dangerous.

Dr. Evans: Could be very dangerous so it slows you down and takes you off another course. Or construction -- something is being built up that you need to work around until the construction is complete so that you are detoured to arrive at your destiny.

When God works with us two things must happen: We must be developed for our destiny and our destiny must be made ready for us. And only when those two cross do we get to where God wants us to be. And only as we cooperate with the detours will we arrive in a timely fashion at our destiny.

James: So we've got to believe the one that is allowing the detours to come or actually put them there, the construction that is in process, the danger that we're being warned of, it's all a part of God's kingdom purpose. Because you kind of seem to be a kingdom-centered person and you're talking about the kingdom of God like the kingdom that's here where he is king here not the one we're going to go to where the enemy is totally gone and we've got no more challenges. You're talking about now.

So when you find people listening to you along this line, do you find that if they get it, they're better prepared for the kingdom now and to fulfill his purpose?

Dr. Evans: The unifying theme of scripture is the glory of God through the advancement of his kingdom; that's what ties the whole Bible together from Genesis to Revelation. Kingdom is rule. God wants to demonstrate his rule from heaven into history and he does that through bringing his people to arrive at their designated point of usefulness.

So destiny is your customized life purpose that God has equipped, redeemed, and enabled you to

achieve in order to advance his kingdom program. If it's not tied to kingdom, you can't reach destiny because destiny is always to reach a kingdom goal.

James: And he is about kingdom.

Dr. Evans: He is only about kingdom.

James: And he establishes it in us.

Dr. Evans: He establishes it in us and then he works it through us so that he can make an impact -- we can make an impact for him in the advancement of his cause in history.

James: Do you understand all that? You got that?

Betty: What I'm understanding is the detours are a very important part of our destiny. Because there are times in my life where I can look back and I'd say -- at that moment I would say, "Why is my life going in this direction right now?" But now I can look back and say, "God, thank you! Because it made me who I am today for your purposes."

Dr. Evans: Well, God zigzags us to our destiny. He doesn't take us in a straight line. He's going all over the place. One of my church members said, "You talk about detours. I have a detour and it ran into another detour. They got married and had a baby detour."

[Laughter]

Detours just zigzag and you don't know what God is doing. And oftentimes, during a detour God is silent because he wants to see are we going to trust him like Habakkuk when we're hearing nothing from him but we're going to submit to him because he is doing something.

No, the key verse in the whole book is Genesis Chapter 50, verse 20 when Joseph says, "You meant it for evil, God meant it for good to bring me to this place in order that I might deliver the family." There are a numbers things in that. Number one: People meant it for evil so detours include bad things happening.

James: From bad people with bad intentions.

Dr. Evans: Including in your family.

James: And in your own church.

Dr. Evans: That's right! In my own church.

[Laughter]

So he had people sell him into slavery. He's being accused of rape when he didn't rape anybody. He's been forgotten in jail. And all the time it keeps saying, "But God was with Joseph" -- even when all these bad things are happening.

So when you look at Genesis Chapter 50, verse 20 it says you meant it one way, God meant it another way, but the two came together to bring me to this location. And this location is designed to do something bigger than just for me, it is to be the beginning of building a nation because God is always doing a kingdom work with your destiny routed through your detours.

James: When you delivered this series of messages, what effect did you see it having? And if we say -- because I'm real good at liking everything you do and I'm real committed to telling everybody to tune in on it; do you agree with that?

Dr. Evans: You've been delightful!

[Laughter]

James: Would I be a positive detour? Detouring over here toward Fort Worth. If people get into the book, what is it your hope that they're going to take away?

Dr. Evans: Couple of things, the first hope I take away is hope. That now they can see that the chaos in their life can have a positive outworking because God can use messes to create miracles. He can hit a bull's-eye with a crooked stick. That is because when I learn that his Providence and sovereignty can work through the good, the bad, and the ugly, he can take my mistakes, my sins, my circumstances, and reconfigure them.

My wife's here, she is a great cook. When my kids were growing up she would make these huge Sunday meals, a roast, potatoes, green beans, ice tea, 7-Up cake -- it'll make you want to slap your mama.

[Laughter]

She would be killing it in the kitchen. But she wasn't going to do that again on Monday. This was Sunday only. After we ate on Sunday she became the Tupperware queen because she put all the leftovers in the refrigerator, brought them out on Monday, chopped it, died it, put it in a casserole dish, sprinkled some cheese over it, grated cheese, poured some cream of mushroom over it, put

it back in the oven, brought it out, gave it a French sounding name...

[Laughter]

And what it was was it was leftovers in the hands of a master. God can dice, chop, and restir the things in our lives and you can wind up looking back when you hit your destiny saying, "Mmh-mmh good!"

[Laughter]

That's what Romans 8:28 says: All things work together for good.

[Applause]

James: You and I have been friends for awhile. And for a little baby that wasn't ever supposed to be born because I was a product of rape. And a doctor said, "No." I couldn't have been born today likely; it is just too easy to get rid of me. And yet, God had a plan, he had a destiny. It looked like I started out in a nice little pastor's home and my mother drags me out from under the bed, takes me into the poverty where none of our houses face the street; we're in alleys and dumps and rivers.

It is amazing with all those detours that God could still do something with me; would you agree? I need some encouragement. Would you agree that God took a very difficult situation and did at least a little bit positive with it?

Dr. Evans: Well, he's done a lot positive with it. I remember when I was in seminary and you came and preached. I remember this. I was sitting there. I was looking up at you and your sermon was on tarrying. I need to tarry more with the Lord. That was your sermon that day. I remember you because you were good back then!

[Laughter]

I remember you.

But to think that you would be doing this in a seat and not just standing in a pulpit, God maneuvered some things and made some things different. That's why you can never predict today where you're going to wind up tomorrow because God shifts things along the way based on his program, his will, our giftedness and our obedience.

James: Do you know the detour that God put me on to sit by this beautiful girl that just loves Jesus, and you look at two people that are basically wired shy -- you would hardly believe that about me, her you believe it -- but here we sit pointing to Jesus and people see a miracle. And instead of me standing in the coliseums which was I blessed to preach to the big crowds?

Dr. Evans: That was that season, yes.

James: And then the Lord sits me here and really Billy Graham's son Franklin came to see me and Betty and I'm just going to tell you what he said, "Daddy says you're the best. What are you doing sitting on a sofa by your wife? Why aren't you in the coliseums?"

And I leaned over and I looked at Franklin. I said, "Because God called me to be a servant to you."

And we were the first ones to help give him a big gift for Samaritan's Purse. And then we have been helping him and praying for him ever since.

As a matter of fact, I wrote Franklin a love letter a few months back from God the father and from his Dad, who isn't able to articulate right now at his age. I said, "I want your dad to talk to you. So I want to tell you what he wants you to hear and then I want you to hear what this father says." He said the letter meant a lot to him.

What was that? It was a servant role. I just want to ask you the question. You saw me in the crusades, but can we be effective as a servant to others? Have I stepped down to step into that role?

Dr. Evans: You can't be effective until you are a servant to others because the whole purpose of God's kingdom destinations for his people is the impact through us not just to us. See we've got to have a generation who wants to be blessed but not necessarily be a blessing. The biblical definition of blessing is God working to you so he can flow through you. If you're a cul-de-sac to Christian you're going to be limited. You've got to be a conduit Christian.

So that's why I tell people when they go to God, not only tell God what you want but how somebody is going to benefit if he gives it to you. Because now you've got his undivided attention because he knows he can use you to be a blessing and not just be blessed.

James: And servant is greatest in the kingdom. And anybody sitting out here or watching on television says well, they can't speak or preach like Dr. Evans, or maybe talk as freely as you but everybody can be servant. Would you and I not both agree that serving others is the greatest joy we've ever experienced, more so than even preaching?

Dr. Evans: Not only is it the greatest joy and it is, but it is also the greatest thing Jesus recognizes. It is interesting when he was talking to his disciples, they were arguing about who is going to be great, he didn't tell them, "Don't want to be great." He says, "Oh you can want to be great, just don't do it like the Gentiles do it. Do it through servanthood." So go for greatness which means you go for service.

James: And brother, if you get the detours down right you're going to end up being a servant of the most high God and most effective in the kingdom.

Dr. Evans: That's because detours are always designed to bring you back to the main highway.
[Laughter]

James: Do you y'all like this guy?

[Applause]

I don't want to say that he writes better than he preaches because he doesn't -- but he writes equal to his preaching. It is amazing! I can just start reading it and I can preach. I can raise my voice and go on TV like a Teleprompter and they would say, "Boy, he can flat preach!" I'd just preach this book.

Listen to me now. I really mean this. Tony, you know how much I love you and Lois and your whole family, and I'm going to tell you this. I'm saying to you, you say, "You wouldn't love me if you knew me." Well, you might not like me if you knew everything about me but guess what, God does. He's crazy about me. He loves me and I'm covered with love and grace. When I just give him that old piece of clay he can make a vessel that honors him, a vessel through whom he can flow his love and his life.

That's what this is really about. To show you that in God's divine plan and the destiny he has for you -- and there are no small people in his plan, you're all vital parts of his body and his kingdom purpose. If you will understand that God is actually not misdirecting but redirecting for the better.

Who would have ever thought Joseph could have been what he became? To think that his own brothers threw him in a pit and just knew he would be dead or taken to be a slave. But think about this. When he was tempted -- tempted by some beautiful woman he said, "Absolutely no!" And then her lies put him in prison. You could either say, "God, what a way to take care of your good honest kid!" And in that prison the miracles of God began to unfold.

You know what, Tony? I don't think he went in there with bitterness and unforgiveness. I think something was happening in his heart that when he opened up and was able to look at others and be able to look past that and look forward, I think his future began to unfold right there.

You point out in this book the importance of not holding unforgiveness or bitterness in your heart. We've got to lay those things down before the Lord.

Dr. Evans: Unforgiveness will delay your destiny. Do not burn the bridge over which one day you will have to cross. You will need to be forgiven, therefore you need to be a forgiver. That doesn't necessarily mean you've reconciled immediately because trust has to be built if you've been hurt. But it does mean that you're not seeking revenge and you're not keeping a record. And when you make that decision, you've opened yourself up to God because that's what God does.

James: Isn't that great? Don't you love the way this man communicates truth?

[Applause]

This is a volume -- it's a volume of transforming truth to help you become the one God designed you for in this moment in time.

I'm just praying -- if people want to know, okay, Dr. Evans, how do I find out all the radio stations and times? How do I find out where you're going to speak? How do I find out what conferences are at the church -- other materials that you have, what website would they go to?

Dr. Evans: TonyEvans.org. That's the whole world of Tony Evans is TonyEvans.org.

James: Okay, so if they go online they can get the book. They can get one for somebody they know who they see them in what looks like a major detour and encourage them. So get it.

Tony, one of the things that has been just a part of the book that I have out now is called *Living Amazed*. And the journey that we've experienced in *Living Amazed*, we've kind of referenced it. I was a preacher in large crowds and suddenly I become a servant and I'm on the mission field. The Lord really took us to the mission field. And you know when I lived in poverty and pain, I was able to identify where a lot of people live.

I think most people feel overlooked unimportant; don't you think so? And yet God can take anybody that will just put the clay of their life in his hand and use them. Well, when I went to the mission fields and I saw need, I didn't know if Christians would help them. And yet we came back and said, "Here's a need, and here's a way to legitimately meet it and our viewers have met it. It's been amazing to watch.

I want to show you something that this really -- it deeply concerned us that our viewers wouldn't help. As a matter of fact, we said, "Well, we know the need is great. Maybe we just kind of test it and see if anybody won't get mad at us and talk about you shouldn't point at that kind of thing. But not only did you not get angry, you poured out the love of God. And you said, "We want to do that -- so deeply we want to help." Watch because I think you'll want to help.

On the mission field

Sheila: I have seen pictures of the kind of streets, the red light district and they make it look like it's very glamorous until you actually stop outside one of these places -- until you actually look into the eyes of some of these girls who are very made up. But underneath all that makeup they're just little girls, some of them. They're not called daughter, they're not called sister, they're called like number 15 or number 17. And even further back you see these little cubicles but interestingly enough, the locks are not on the inside, the locks are on the outside.

At some point you say, "Where does this begin?" That in so many of these villages there is abject poverty.

And suddenly, one day a guy shows up and he's got candy that these kids have never seen before. He says to them, "You know what? There is a better life."

And these children can so easily be trapped. And before they realize it, they're gone and their families never see them again.

That's where our ministry comes in. Perhaps the most important day in the lives of these children is the day when they're told there are some people out there who want to harm you but God is watching over you. You use your words, you stay together, you run, you cry out. And to watch them prepare these children not to become statistics is amazing.

The one thing that was clear to me was I can't unsee what I've seen. I can't unhear the things I've heard. We can't leave things the way they are. Part of it is reaching the villages, rescuing those who are already captured -- restore the souls. We're literally changing the world one child at a time.

End of clip

In the studio

James: What you're looking at as you look at those images is you're seeing the horrors of

sexual predation and trafficking; literally taking these children slaves. They get them when they are in an impoverished area and they go and promise the family that they're going to take them and educate them, put these girls to work, send money back to the family. Sometimes they just kidnap them.

And we're able to get those kids who are prime prospects and take care of them. We're able to get many of them out while they're young, maybe a little bit before they just start selling them every day. And then we're able to get some of them totally out and we've set up a situation where you can get them into a very secure place that the predators can't come get them out.

All of this happened, Betty, when we were looking at that beautiful *LIFE Center* in Thailand, the sex capital of the world and the largest rescue area right there. I want to zoom in. I want you to see something there that's on that beautiful Destiny House. Here it is, look at that incredible building, incredible facilities. Many of the children that we started there with are now college professors, they are teachers, they started here. I want you to look in there. Donated by what -- LIFE Outreach International. Who built that? You did. People here, people watching, you built it.

You put the arms of God around broken lives, rescuing them. That's what we do together. We ask you a couple of times a year, let's invest. Think about this. Betty, it is \$128 to rescue a child. That's because you paid for those facilities, you helped the missionary workers be there because they planted their life there full of love. But you enable them to be effective. You gave them the -- this is all over the world, other places like that, not quite as large, not quite as let's say as nice as that one happened to be but that's where we started -- and continuing to build all over the world, all over Asia.

In many places, right now, we're being told we can't even mention the area because it sets the predators off. We can no longer show you close-ups of those children's faces because then they will try to target them. So we're working continually in difficult circumstances but it all happens with love.

Right now with the overseers and the missionaries, they say we've got 5,000 right now we believe we can rescue, we can stop them in the trafficking, get them out of trafficking. So we need to raise the funds for that. It is \$128 to rescue one. Would you help us?

Let me tell you the miracle, Betty. Some of our friends who said we've got to do this, they put up a \$200,000 matching gift which means you give today, \$128 to rescue a child, you rescued two or \$64 it goes to \$128 a child. Maybe you couldn't afford the \$128. But think about this. Thank God there are many of you who say, "I can rescue ten." And you give \$1280, suddenly you've rescued 20 because of the love of some who said we believe in this.

We have some gifts we want to give you. I'm sending you the book that I've written that I believe God can use to not only change your life but awaken the church to begin living in New Testament power, *Living Amazed* the way God wants us to live. We're saying thank you.

We have other gifts. We have the beautiful "Determined Eagle." I think the prettiest bronze we've ever offered. God's people are determined to soar on the turbulence of the times and the challenges of the day. We are able to rise above by the power and grace of God. We live in that trust. We want to say thank you.

But would you right now go online, go to the website, or dial the number and take your bankcard, make the gift that God puts on your heart knowing it will be doubled? Could you help us reach ten? \$1280, suddenly 20 are reached; \$128, not one now but two. Whatever God leads you to do. Please reach out with joy and make the gift God put on your heart. Thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, their spirit and body broken under horrific emotional and physical abuse. Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to save children vulnerable to sex traffickers. You can help rescue those already enslaved and you can help restore their lives and give them a future.

Now a generous opportunity of a \$200,000 matching gift means your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child will be matched to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift we will send you James Robison's new book, *Living Amazed: How divine encounters can change your life*. As you read these inspiring stories you'll learn how to live amazed in the presence of God 24 hours a day.

With your gift of \$100 or more you'll receive James's new book, along with the companion Amazed Journal so you can record accounts in your own life where you're amazed at God's goodness.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help rescue 20 children and you may request our beautiful new "Determined Eagle" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, we've let you know that obviously we would like you to read the book that's kind of the amazing journey that I've experienced. And so much of it is just when people had no idea I was a preacher, they didn't know one thing about me, just somebody walking up in the amazing glory and power of God and miracles happened. Same way with you.

If you'd like to have Dr. Evans book, we're sending you *Living Amazed* to say thank you. You help us help rescue these precious ones from sexual trafficking and you say, "Would you mind sending me Dr. Evans book? I'm facing some detours." Yes, we will to say thank you for touching someone else with love.

Would you join Betty and me in say thanks to Dr. Evans? Love you, buddy! Thank you. Bless you, Lois! We love you.

Thanks so much! Thanks for help us share life every day! Thank you!