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Week 14: Mission: Rescue Life

James and Betty Robison

"Amazing Acts of Grace"

James: I welcome you. I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I want to talk to you in a very intimate and personal way. Betty, I've asked you to join me here while I talk about *Living Amazed*. The book is in the bookstores. You can get it. I hope you will. But what I'm going to be talking about today is what it is like to live amazed. We've been together for 54 years, married. Thank you. By the way, I'm James Robison. Betty and I count it an honor to be able to spend this time not only together but with you. Would you say that our journey together has been amazing?

Betty: Absolutely! That doesn't mean to say there hasn't been challenges. But the challenges in our life have turned out to be amazing in many ways.

James: A lot of times people say, "Well, y'all just have had a wonderful life." I try to tell people it would be hard to get off to a rougher start than I did. My sweet little 40-year-old hospice home nurse is raped by the alcoholic son of the elderly man that she cares for. And having never conceived in 40 years and married when she was younger, adopted a boy 14 years older than me, who every chance he got tried to pour his love out on me but it became difficult because mother had isolated me. But when she went to have me aborted, the doctor wouldn't do it. And for whatever reason, "I'm not going to terminate that baby in your womb."

So when I say to you that today I want to talk to you as up close and personal as I can, please listen to me. I had a rough start. My mother put an ad in the paper, a pastor and his wife came to get me knowing in their mind they could adopt me but my mother never signed the final papers. Then she took me from them when I was five. To say that was a traumatic experience is one that could have been so damaging that I could have never recovered but for amazing -- amazing grace, amazing God. And to live in serious abject poverty for ten years, just moved about; most houses never faced the street.

And with all the pain and the loneliness, to not grow up bitter and hateful, to not look out from poverty and see all around me people that when I'd go to school or go into town, we never had a car, we walked everywhere or rode a bus. But I never resented people that had what I didn't have. I just looked out in a land that was free and I saw possibilities. The miracle that God worked in my life is nothing short of amazement.

Betty, you and I met when we were 15 when I left that broken home and went back to stay with

the pastor and his wife. I can remember the first time I saw you and that smile. I've been on an amazing journey.

But what I want to talk to you today, honey, and I know you're praying for me because you -- Betty launched me into where I am by getting the shyest kid you could ever know elected youth pastor so I had to sit on the platform and introduce the young teenage evangelist that was speaking every night and I had to listen to him. He would quote entire chapters in the Bible.

That week God called me to preach. And when he called me to preach he called me to be an evangelist. Betty, it shocked the whole church because I was so shy. But the thing is, when I went forward and said, "I'm giving you my life." It was like I said, "God, I give you every inch of this boy, this fatherless kid."

It was like God impressed on me because I said, "I don't even know how I'm going to live. I want to be an evangelist, a preacher; I don't know."

And the Lord said, "Where is your faith?"

I said, "It is all in you."

Betty, I meant it. Listen to me. I gave this vessel, an old skinny teenager at the time to God and that's Friday night. And on Monday, at the chemical company where I worked as a pipefitter's helper I preached to all the people there from a flatbed truck. And to tell you that they looked like they had been slain. I mean it was the most amazing thing I'd ever seen in my life. I couldn't believe that this power to communicate was coming through my lips.

And from that moment, now think about this -- I'm not even quite 18, just a little bit short of 18, and God's called me. By the time I'm 19, Billy Graham hears about me preaching because we're overflowing the coliseum and there's this kid that's on the front page of the newspapers that's preaching in power. And he starts helping me, and the whole ministry exploded.

Here's the thing I want you to understand. God took me on an amazing journey. Now I want you to get this. In the book of Acts, when Jesus says as he is leaving, "You're going to be my witnesses at home, the neighboring community, to the ends of the earth." But he told them to tarry until they were endued with power from on high; until this other one of the same kind, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete is filling you to overflowing. You tarry -- and then you're going to be these witnesses.

Now I want to say to you. There is no way to be what he left us here to be apart from the power of his Holy Spirit flowing through us like a river of life and a river of love freely, continually.

If you look at the second chapter -- this is so amazing to me. Look at verse seven in Chapter 2: And they were amazed and marveled saying, "Why are all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it we hear them in our own language, in our own dialect?"

Think about this. The power of the Holy Spirit came upon these New Testament believers who were tarrying until they were endued. And when that power came they began to communicate the gospel. It wasn't just a matter of speaking a heavenly language. They were communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ where people could understand them.

That means if we have the Holy Spirit controlling us, people may have a prayer language, they may have a heavenly language, but the miracle that happened here was the gospel was proclaimed in such power that everyone understood it in their own dialect. I mean if it is southern, or it's Northern or it's New York or New Jersey rapid talk or whatever it is, it didn't matter. If it is the millennials or if it's the older people, they could hear and understand. The power of the Holy Spirit makes us witnesses.

Now look what happened. Here is Simon Peter standing up and he begins to preach. By the way, the people continued in amazement, verse 12. We've got the word *amazed*, (*Living Amazed*) right here at the birth of the church when they began to witness. And Simon Peter who has just failed Jesus and denied him suddenly becomes the keynote speaker at Pentecost. In other words, the least likely to succeed and be affective suddenly becomes the communicator.

It's kind of like in a way I was least likely; I was too shy. I was the fatherless kid. I'd never been trained. I've never been to seminary. I've never gotten a college degree. The college I went to, East Texas gave me a doctor's degree a couple of years ago. I thought, dear God! I didn't finish a course. But they said, "God's done something with you and we see it." Thank you, East Texas Baptist University. Thank you, faculty. Thank you all of you.

But listen. I'm an untrained guy and yet God called me. Were you amazed the first time you heard me preach?

Betty: Absolutely! Because I knew the person that was shy, wouldn't get up and give a class report, wouldn't get up and speak in front of anybody. And never wanted to be noticed; just wanted to kind of sit back, stay back in the background. I was a little bit shy myself but I was so impressed by God in the way he just transformed your heart and your life. Because you did! As this little teenager I stood there and I thought, God, this is amazing!

James: And it's been an amazing journey. I want you to stay with me here. Because here's the deal. I'm not like a select person or Betty, you'd say, "She's so shy and yet she sits there by you

on television. And she's such a blessing." This is just the glory of God. This is the amazing grace of God. This is the amazing gifting of God. And it isn't for people you see on television or someone who's speaking -- it's for all of us. And what we do is not more important than what God, in his amazing gifting and grace wants to do through you.

Now I want you to watch what happens here: 3,000 people get saved. Peter calls them to repentance to receive the transforming power of the gospel message of Jesus Christ dying for our sins, raised to live in us. And then as that chapter concludes, they are all together worshipping God like a family. They have everything in common, which means we're a family and we meet needs out of the overflow and the love in our heart not because Caesar or Pharaoh told us to do it. This is the overflow of God's love. This is the only solution to the pain of humanity, to the poverty, in spirit and poverty period. The only way you meet needs is a compassionate approach, a compassion connection -- the amazing grace and love of God. There is no other way.

Listen. The viewers of *LIFE Today* love to meet needs because when they see the need met and it is effective, their heart leaps and they become a river, a conduit of love flowing through them to work miracles around the world. The American people, I believe, see needs but they address them some way other than compassion, and in common commitment to the purposes of God, kingdom purpose.

Now watch what happened. In the third chapter, Peter, the guy that denied Jesus, sees a beggar begging alms and they said, "Such as we have we give you. In the name of Jesus rise and be healed." And the man got up walking that had been laying there and people had seen him for so many years! And it is an amazing thing.

They took note of the one who used to sit, this is verse 10, Chapter 3, at the beautiful gate of the temple begging alms and they were filled with wonder and what -- amazement at what had happened. And while he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so called Portico of Solomon full of amazement.

They said, "Why are you amazed? This is not something we did. This is the power of God."

Now the whole story goes on that they noticed a notable miracle occurred but it disturbed a lot of the rulers and the leaders, just like the power of God moving through his people will always disturb the powers that be and the powers of darkness. And they were disturbed and they began to complain but in verse 13 it says they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated -- like me -- untrained men, but they marveled and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

As Peter said later in his own letter: "We were eye witnesses of his majesty and now his

majesty is flowing through."

Listen! The power of God was so great on Simon Peter that there was a point when people just wanted to get the lame, the sick, and the needy in his shadow; that if his shadow passed over them, a miracle occurred whatever the need was. This was the power of God.

This is the amazing power of God that he wants to release today. Now what happened? The forces of the world, the government, and religious leaders, organized religion began to try to silence these witnesses and threaten them and told them, "Don't speak anymore." What did they say? "Do you think you can determine whether it is right for us to speak the word or the will of God? Who are you to tell us what we are to do?"

Listen to what they said with all the threats: You're going to put us in prison. You're going to beat us. Listen to me. "We cannot help but speak the things we've seen and heard. It's too big. It's too amazing. We have to speak it. We can't hold it back. This is the power of God's spirit flowing like a river. I can't stop it."

Listen. That's the spirit that's supposed to be in all of us. It's what came in my life more than 55 years ago when God said, "I call you to communicate the gospel as an evangelist; walk like a shepherd with a shepherd's heart, lead people out of darkness. Lead them to the water. Lead them to the peace that even prevails in the valley of the shadow of death. Lead them to the place where I, God, prepare a table before them in the presence of their accusers and their enemies and they fear no evil because I'm with you. And goodness and mercy follows you."

That's *Living Amazed*. Now they couldn't stop them. That's the way it's supposed to be with the church. All hell, the gates of hell do not prevail. You cannot stop us from being witnesses in the power of God's spirit. It's not something we work up. It's not trained program or religious flesh. It is the power of God's spirit.

And then -- Betty, this is so amazing! When we've got so many needs in this world, earlier I referenced how in that newborn church, that early church they had things in common to share with needs but look at this. They began as believers to say, "Whatever we have to do to meet a need."

They began to sell things that they didn't have to have and they brought the resources in love to say we're going to meet needs. And the church, living in amazement, paves the way, inspires that kind of commitment, inspires that kind of compassion and that kind of love.

It's time now for us to begin experiencing amazing grace, amazing power, amazing manifestations, miraculous change through the power of the gospel in the lives of individuals.

And all these people full of hate and rage, the only thing that overcomes that kind of hate, that anger, that rage, that deadly deception and division and destruction is the power of almighty God. It is the love of God that gave Jesus and the power of God that raised him from the grave and the power of his spirit to live in us that is the way you overcome all of that wrath, that anger, that rage -- everything that is out of control. All of the division, hostility, and animosity. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the witness of the true believer just like in the New Testament *Living Amazed*.

The reason I wrote the story of *Living Amazed* is because that's kingdom life. His kingdom come right here in us right now. Not the kingdom to come, the kingdom that is here manifest. Before Jesus comes in glory for the church we must see the church adorned in that glory. We want his glory to come upon us before he comes in glory for us so that the whole world can see him high and lifted up. And he draws all men to himself because they see him as he is.

Father, this is my prayer for every person listening, for every person with ears to hear, that you would open the eyes of those who do not see and they will see as you see; and their heart will beat in harmony with yours and they will extend their hands as you extend your arms of love and mercy. And we put your arms around a broken, hurting world and we see healing for the nation and for our own families and for the church; in Jesus' name.

I really pray with all my heart that you will get the book, *Living Amazed*. Betty, I'm I praying that every viewer will say, "I want you to send it to me." I pray you'll go online and get copies for your friends that they may begin to live like what we just read in this Bible; that I have actually been able to watch and live and see the power of amazing grace for 73 years, and 55 years in ministry, 54 years in marriage. Please let us help you.

Betty, one of the things that has thrilled me and I know it has you, the way our viewers say, "Show us a need. Show us hurt. Show us pain and show us how to meet it. And we will meet it. We will extend arms of love."

You have been for so many years putting God's arms of love around the desperate, the thirsty, the hungry, the hurting; and right now, together, we're setting captives free. Rescue Life. Some of our friends who are blessed said, "We will match the first \$200,000 that you give to help right now rescue precious little ones, women and children, from the sex trafficking that is so horrible, so deadly, so damaging."

I want you to watch and you're going to see the need for amazing grace. It's the only answer. You know what I think? You're going to want to be right in the middle of it and just say, "Let me have an opportunity to be the miracle to express the grace." Watch.

On the mission field

Sheila: Honestly, it's overwhelming. My first night here I got... I went back to my hotel room and I just cried because I thought, Lord, I can't believe this! I can't believe that this is happening!

It's just like this spiritual battle between good and evil and evil is making a lot of money over there. You walk along the street and these girls are all dressed up in their makeup and short skirts. And it gets darker and darker. And you go back further and you see these little rooms and the locks are not on the inside to keep a girl safe, the locks are on the outside to keep a girl trapped.

As I looked at these doors knowing that behind these doors are girls that are being held against their will or their will is so broken down, it was so clear to me, we have got to be the answer to their prayers, to some who have given up hope, to some who don't even think there is any other way to live because they've been told, if you escape we know where you live and we'll go get your family.

We need to be the answer. In Jesus' name, it's all about freedom. It is about hearing chains break. Isn't it interesting that it was a slave trader who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace."
I once was lost but now I'm found; was blind and now I see.

Let's do that in Jesus' name.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Wow! Amazing grace! That is what initiates the ability to live amazed, and to share that grace, that transforming love. Some of our friends have been blessed. By the way, we have people who are very blessed financially and they are so unselfish. And we have people who have such modest means and they are so committed. It is just we do what we can do and we do it with joy. We count it all joy. We rejoice that we're able to help.

So we have a \$200,000 matching gift that was offered in love. You can give a \$128 gift, which is how we start that rescue process and it will be doubled. Instead of touching one, you've now got two.

Some people have said, Betty, "\$128 is huge for me. I can maybe give \$64." Well, now it is \$128 because it just doubled. We have friends, thank God -- and Betty and I asked God to let us do this and he's let us do it, he's enabled us to do it, he's heard our prayer -- \$1280 rescues ten, now it's 20, twice that number. Please give that \$1280.

Let us send you something that was birthed in my heart, an eagle is designed to create and survive and thrive in speed he can't generate but he's designed to catch the speed of the wind, even jet streams. He's designed to ride turbulence to the heights so that he can see with magnetic vision. Miraculous!

You and I have been designed to be carried, utilized, motivated and moved by the power of the Holy Spirit as yielded vessels, clay in the hand of the greatest potter.

The "Determined Eagle" is determined to rise on the turbulence of the times and the challenges of the day. Beautiful bronze! We want to send it to you to say thanks because that's what God in his amazing grace and power enables us to do, to soar like an eagle.

Your gift will be doubled. Amazing life is offered. *Living Amazed* is supposed to be the way Christians live, not just a few people. I want to send you that book to say thank you for simply reaching out in love and touching someone. I pray you'll get copies and share it with your friends, praying they live amazed because that's really the destiny and design for the church.

Would you take your bankcard, go online? Would you dial the number, take that card, and would you make the gift God put on your heart knowing it will be doubled? You can give that \$128, you can give the \$1280, do it.

Father, I pray every person right now will be moved by your spirit to simply do what you impress on their heart; in Jesus' name.

Would you help us rescue these precious children? Help us set them free? Thank you so much for doing it. Thank you.

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: Betty and I together say thank you for being determined to allow God to carry you and direct you; and committed to *Living Amazed*. Thank you for touching someone with love. Thanks for letting us share this with you.

You may want to encourage friends to watch the message of *LIFE Today*. You can watch any of the messages online on LifeToday.org any time. This may be a message you want to share with some of your friends. I hope you will. Thanks so much for sharing life. We appreciate it. God bless you.