

8/10/17
 Week 33: WFL
 James and Betty Robison
 John Gray

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

James: And John Gray is with us. He says, *I Am Number 8*. David was number eight child. John was here years ago, probably six or seven years ago and then I saw him at other times, saw him at Gateway, saw him at an art conference. I'm going to introduce him and we're going to welcome him but I'm going to tell you what I felt about him. Would you welcome John Gray to *LIFE Today*?

[Cheers & Applause]

John: Honor to see you sir.

James: You came here the first time and you were funny and you entertained us but boy, I could tell there was something really special about you. Then I saw you at Gateway and I saw you... really you were part of praise and maybe even laughter and so forth. But you said some things there, and I can remember sitting there watching you and I thought, there is really something very special about the relationship with God, and what was flowing through you was profound, it was powerful. It wasn't like something that just is trite or religious but it was powerful.

Then I was just taken back when I found out the largest television outreach on Sunday mornings and then many times through the week is Lakewood and Joel Osteen, of course, I go back to being with his dad, is one of the first encouragers when God stretched me beyond my Baptist circles, sometimes kind of can limit us. He said go to the whole church, the whole world to help the church be whole, become a servant -- not just a spokesman but a servant spokesman. I watched the journey there.

Then all of the sudden realized there you are and then you're more than there you are, you are now preaching and you preached on Wednesday nights on a regular basis as a pastoral ministry

and you're powerful and you'll have maybe 9,000 or 10,000 people there and a lot of people's lives transformed. Is this a miracle? It is just huge. How in the world do you explain it John?

John: You can't explain it. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. I grew up in a home where my mother and father divorced when I was very young. Whatever I am in front of you and in front of your audience and your television audience, I am because my mother is a praying woman and she was relentless in keeping me in the presence of Jesus. She didn't just talk it, she lived it. So she walked Jesus in front of me.

So whatever I am, it is because she was relentless in prayer. She ran interference to the devil. She told the devil that he wasn't going to take me. That I was going to be better than what I came from. And that I was going to be a man that left a legacy. That's exactly what God is doing here. I watched my mother build bridges beyond race, beyond cultural boundaries of specificity. I watched my mother become broad and loving. These were lessons that have formed me to this day.

Being at Lakewood is not just about being at the largest platform in this country from a media standpoint or even a venue standpoint. It's about being able to reach countless nations with the gospel of Jesus and being an extension of Pastor Joel's heart and building bridges in a time where culture, unfortunately still matters. But the only color that matters to me is red and that is the blood of Jesus. So all of the other things have to fall away. There isn't going to be no black section in heaven, there won't be a white section of heaven or Mexican section of heaven, won't be a Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal or holiness section of heaven --

James: Give me a five, buddy! Give me a five!

John: There is going to be one heaven -- and if you've got a problem with diversity, heaven is going to be a problem for you.

James: And it is absolutely beautiful and there everyone is unique. No one is unimportant. Everybody is a vital part of the body of Christ. I just wish we could get over the division. It is the devil, the father of lies is also the father of dissension and division and the main primary accuser of the brethren. And he's got the brethren joining him in accusation -- it's time to stop.

John: It's time to stop. I think what your program, what you and your wife have been able to do in building bridges and always sharing the gospel of Jesus and having so many diverse voices on has allowed people to see that what we think has separated us actually shouldn't be separating us at all. We're much more in line than people think.

You love Jesus? You believe he is the only way to the father? You believe he died and rose

again? You believe he's coming back? If we've got them things in common that makes us family. My skin might look a little different from yours but it is the same Jesus. My expression may be different from yours, it is the same Jesus. My passion may be expressed differently but it is the same Jesus. And that's what matters to me. I will unrelentless -- I will be relentless and unapologetic in preaching the gospel of Jesus. That's what I told the Lord when I said yes to his calling. That's what my mother prayed for.

James: *I Am Number 8* -- significance of that title.

John: Overlooked, undervalued, but not forgotten by God. First Samuel 16 -- hallelujah! Samuel comes to Jesse's house in Bethlehem. He is looking for a king. Jesse pulls out seven sons and Samuel is trying to pour oil and the oil, symbolic of the Holy Ghost said, "Nope! I'm not going nowhere." Everybody stay in the bottle. Nothing is moving. No oil is flowing. The sons are waiting and the bottle's like, "I'm not going nowhere."

It gets to the seventh son and Samuel says this, "Are all the young men here?" And then Jesse says, "Well, there yet remains the youngest but you don't want him. He is the one -- you don't want him. He's the one out in the field keeping the sheep. You don't want him. Nobody sees him as valuable."

Samuel says, "Send for him. We will not sit down until he comes."

I don't know who this is for but God has people standing, waiting for you to arrive. Things won't get started until you show up.

This is the power of the Holy Ghost. That God will hide the anointing in plain sight. David was right there the entire time. His brothers didn't like him. His father couldn't see him. But God had called him. And as David was walking to the house, he had no clue that it was the last time he would walk as a regular boy. He was going to be anointed a king within a few moments.

And as the oil flowed, it flowed from -- he was still dirty from being in the field. This is what blesses me. He was still dirty. He didn't have time to get cleaned up. He didn't get time to wash up. He got the oil and he was still dirty which means God will see you in your mess and still anoint you for his purpose.

[Cheers & Applause]

Somebody bless the Lord! David was anointed the king. He was number eight. Eight is the new beginning. He was the eighth son of a forgotten man in Bethlehem. There was also somebody else they overlooked in Bethlehem. A thousand years later here he comes: For unto you is born

this day in the city of David a savior, it is Christ the Lord.

And so this David who was overlooked and undervalued was the same lineage that my savior came through. So for every person that has ever felt overlooked, undervalued, perhaps your gifts and callings were lost on people who had more resources, more degrees and better pedigree. God has a purpose for your life. You can't sneak into the earth. You have to be spoken into the earth. And if God spoke it you've got a purpose. And if you've got a purpose, you're going to live it out and you will not return to him void. That's what number eight is about.

Because I shouldn't be here talking to you. I should be somewhere in a grave but because God had a purpose for my life he snatched me out where other young men didn't make it out and now I get to tell people that Jesus can work it out.

James: I love it! Now in the book because you only got -- this is not Oprah. So we don't have an hour. This is not Dr. Phil, we've got just so much time. But our viewers they love to help people and totally change their lives. So we've got limited time.

But you poured a lot into this book. So if people go to the bookstore, go online and order it and get it, what do you want to happen in their life? What do you want them to get out of it? Because you've had some pretty rough things. You were abused when you were a little boy and it has a terrible effect. You've been through a lot. And you know people are going through a lot. What do you want them to get out of the book?

John: You know that every negative experience, everything that the enemy has thrown was actually preparation for purpose. When I was abused at four years old, not by family members, two teenaged boys from the neighborhood, one stood by while the other did this awful thing, it was on the front lawn of my home. My mother was inside the house. Cars were driving by, no one stopped. And for years I didn't tell anyone. And I remember saying, I was going to tell my mother but the teenaged guy said, "If you tell you'll be the one who gets in trouble."

So I kept this thing that happened inside until I was 19, maybe. I realized that the enemy loves secrets. He loves to keep things in the dark. That's why Jesus is the light of the world. And when the light of the Holy Spirit gets in those dark places it shows you that the enemy was a liar from the beginning. And that what happened in my childhood does not have to inform my destiny even though it was sent to cause me to question my worth, my value, and my identity. What happened is that my mother introduced me to Jesus and I made him my savior at seven years old. So what the enemy sent as a seed actually became a foundation. So now what he meant for bad, God meant for good.

So where I didn't have a father growing up, now I have my own children, I can build a legacy.

Where I didn't see a good marriage, now I can begin to break those curses and chains. What this book is about is saying all of the negative things that have happened in your life were not God sentencing you to pain, he was trusting you with it. You can be trusted with pain, you can be trusted with treasure because the treasure comes from the pain, it comes from the process. This book is to encourage people in their walk. God doesn't waste pain and there are no forgotten lives.

As believers it doesn't mean that we won't struggle. But our faith is the filter through which we see our struggles and our pain. The lens of the cross clarifies why I had to go through what I went through. It is not just for me, it is for the people that are connected to me. So when I say *I Am Number 8*, I'm just declaring that I'm a new beginning and I'm something new in Christ Jesus, I'm a new creation. I have value, I have purpose, I have identity and I can bring value.

But most people didn't see that. But that's the power of God just anointing you in front of the folks that thought they knew you. You go from anonymous to necessary in one moment. You go from "What's your name again?" To "We've been expecting you" in one moment. You go from the kid that was opening at the art conference at Gateway to sitting with Pastor James and Betty on *LIFE Today*. Don't tell me what God won't do.

[Laughter]

James: I look at my own childhood. I didn't have a father and most people know, the product of a forced relationship on a hospice nurse. She got pregnant at 40 and had me at 41 because the doctor wouldn't abort me. And then I grew up in real extreme poverty. But one of the things that happened in that pain was I saw pain. I saw hurt. I saw people that were overlooked.

When I found my way to the mission fields of the world after preaching to the big crowds and coliseums and stadiums and seeing literally millions of people come to Christ, when I went over and saw the overlooked in the third world countries and primarily in Africa, I asked the Lord if he wanted me to stay there. The missionaries encouraged me, please don't. It wasn't that they didn't like me and Betty, they liked us but they said, "If you'll go back and tell the people that watch you on television to help us and keep us here then we won't have to spend a lot of our time trying to get support, you could keep us here and make us effective."

We came back to do it and I didn't know if people would help but amazingly they did. I'd been doing this two or three years and I got a call from Joel's dad and this is when Joel is still back doing cameras and back behind the scenes, he had no clue. He was like you, he had no clue. He was just like you, he would never believe he would be where he is. And as a matter of fact, everybody around him didn't -- probably even his own family didn't.

But Joel's dad, John called me and I had preached for him at Lakewood. He had known my journey and he knew what was going on and he watched God stretch me. He really blessed me. But he called me and he said, "I need to tell you, James, you and Betty something. I'm a mission-minded pastor and I want to thank you and I want to thank Betty. You have brought the mission fields of the world and the missionaries into our homes all over America." He said, "From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you, James, you and Betty."

You know what, John? That's the truth. We have allowed the world to see the compassion of God through missionaries that literally placed their lives in the midst of indescribable suffering and pain. They march into hell for a heavenly cause. It's a joy for these people to undergird them.

Isn't it wonderful that God gives all of us that opportunity? And it was out of my own pain that I could better identify with the pain of others and reach out and touch it with the love of God because of people like in this studio and people watching us all over the world.

John: I think that is the calling of the gospel for all of us, that we have a mission field, a local mission field but we also support the spreading of the gospel throughout all the world. When you have gone through pain and tragedy, you empathize with those who don't have resources, who don't have clean drinking water, who don't have proper housing. When we have been given so much, I believe it is the calling of God and the mandate of the church for us to extend. This was the book of Acts, that we had all things common and distributed to each one as they had need and the church grew daily.

James: Do you like this? Has God given this man a gift? Do you know what I believe? I believe our daughter Robin, Betty and my daughter Robin, I believe she is watching. I think, sometimes she says, "That's good, Dad!"

You know who else I saw watching just now? This is just -- I just saw it. I saw Martin Luther King looking down at you and saying, "That man can communicate!"

Do you agree he has got a gift from God to communicate with power? It is a supernatural gift. I saw it on you the first time you came here doing more entertainment and having fun. But I saw you when you stood on that platform and I watched you when you were more of an M.C. but all of the sudden, in that moment, God just flowed through you like a river. I remember thinking, dear God in heaven, what have you given us?

John, God gave me a love for you and a prayer for you. I've got to be honest with you. He lifted you up and put you in a place. Joel, just listen to me a minute. I sure love you. I want you to know you poured God's grace over this very worthy man to receive it because this man will release the river that flows in freely to all people. I really believe that's what you want to do. It's

what everybody in the body of Christ should do, just release the life and the love of God freely like a river. I thank you, Joel. Thank you so much!

Would you just say thanks so much to God? And thank you to John Gray?

Boy, you are special! You know both of us are named after a disciple. The boy, if there was one and one of them, James was "a son of thunder" and a lot of people think God made me one of those. But I want to tell you something, boy, there never was such a disciple as John. I know I'm named James but John became my hero. Not only leaning on Jesus and wanting to be close to him, but spending those last years looking out, think about it, separated on that island, looking across that sea, speaking directly the word of God, the direct mind of God and the heart of God to the churches for the ages.

But then he said something in the end, there will be no more sea. No more separation, John. No more separation for our loved ones, no more separation from our Robin, no more separation from anything that cuts you off from all those things that are precious to you. I'm telling you, God is offering us such an incredible place in his heart and he wants to express his heart through us freely.

Father, I pray we will let you do what you want to do through us and you get the glory; in Jesus' name.

John, you're a tremendous blessing. Our viewers, just like I said about Joel's dad saying, "You brought the mission fields of the world into our homes," let me tell you this, we wouldn't be able to keep bringing them into your homes if you didn't enable us to keep those missionaries' hands filled so it wasn't just hearts full but they have the ability to meet the needs of the people. And the greatest joy, most of you tell us you have is giving people Water for LIFE and telling them about the water of life. I'm telling you, if we could keep drilling these water wells it just changes everything for millions of people.

I want you to watch please. I want you to watch very closely and very prayerfully, and say, "God what can I do right now?" I promise you, there's something you can do this moment to become somebody's miracle. Watch please!

On the mission field:

Announcer: These worn paths provide routes for people and animals alike so they can make their way to water sources. The problem with that is in most villages, families have to share the very same water source with the animals.

James: Animals drinking. And sad is feces, these ladies are here washing. And you can see

by looking at the water that it's -- you wouldn't want to wash your clothes in it but they do. The problem is people drink this and it is absolutely 100% contaminated and it is killing people here in Africa.

Announcer: It is hard to imagine the impact these polluted water sources have on a person until you take a look at the facts. The lack of safe water is one of the world's largest causes of illnesses. And even more tragic is the fact that these waterborne illnesses are one of the leading causes of death for children under the age of five.

Ralph: Jesus says in the book of John, "He who believes in me, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." When you help us bring clean water to these villages, you're really making a difference in bringing life to people who desperately need a sense of hope. Thank you so much for giving. Thank you for working together to bring the love of God to these people just one cup of water at a time.

In the studio:

James: Wow! And you know what? That is exactly what happens. It's a cup of water at a time but when you give them a well -- think about this, Jesus said, "If you give just a cup of water in my name you won't lose your reward."

Now don't start jumping around, what is that reward? Leave that in God's hands. He knows what it looks like. He knows what's best. Sometimes we don't. But he says, "If you give just a cup of water in my name" -- in other words, you see a need and you meet it.

Betty, what would happen if we give a well of water? And you and I have been doing that now for years. We asked God to let us, every time the missionaries bring the opportunity, "God please let us be able to give a well." Some of you have joined in that prayer. And you've told us God miraculously has enabled us to do it. And we have some who will give several wells during the course of a year.

I don't know what you can do. But I know one thing, nothing you do is small. It's huge! And if you gave just one family water then what a miracle. But think about the reality of this. The wells cost \$4800. If you can give one, Betty and I are asking God to move on you and lead you to do it and enable you to do it. So if you can give a well, \$4800, please do it. If you can give more than one, do it.

But here's the thing I want you to understand. I think it is very important that you get this. Most of the resources that come in to drill the wells come from gifts of \$48 or \$144, I use those examples. A \$48 gift gives ten people, basically, when you break it out, water the rest of their

life. So you're giving many cups of water for those ten people the rest of their life; \$144 and you've given 30 people water the rest of their life, cups of water every day. Can you do that? I pray you will.

Let me tell you another miracle. There are many areas we can't get drilling rigs in because of the terrain; we just simply can't get up into that rugged area. But God answered a prayer and gave us a filter system that works like dialysis. And you can give three families their own filter systems to filter any kind of water, and it is an absolute fact, it will purify it and get all the germs and all the deadly stuff out of it and give them clean, fresh clean drinking water that we can give three families that for \$100. So would do you that?

There is a level at which you can help. If you can drill the well, do the \$48, if you can give \$1200 and pray three join you, we've got it or \$2400 and pray another person joins you, you've got a prayer answered and you become the miracle answer to prayer, we've got another well.

So whatever you can do, I want you to right now go online, *LIFE Today*, or dial the number. People are calling in right now praying to receive the water of life, to have somebody agree with them in prayer and that call is paid for by love. So you call or go online, take your bankcard, please, use it the way you should always use it, like a check and make the gift God put on your heart. Would you please do that?

Father, I pray every person watching will move right now to get their card, to make the call or go online and make the gift you put on their heart; in Jesus' name. Thank you!

Please do it. And thank you so much for giving life.

Begin video clip

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

The good news is there is a solution. **Mission:** Water for Life is one of the most proven and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything!

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 15 nations. A gift of \$48 will provide disease-free water for ten people, \$72 will provide for 15 people, and \$144 will

help provide clean water straight from the ground for 30 people.

Please also consider an additional gift of \$100 to help provide three families with water filtration kits in emergency areas where our drilling rigs are unable to reach. As our thank you, we'll send you the books, *Words of Jesus* and *Words of Healing*. One contains only the words of Jesus and the other scriptures for healing in your body, mind, and soul. With your \$100 gift you can receive both hardbound and softbound editions of these scripture promise books.

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 hand sculpted "Determined Eagle" bronze. Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

Ralph: We're here in Burundi, Africa up in the mountains where they cannot get drill rigs to come up here to drill wells. This scenario happens around the world, not just here. We've discovered that these people up here have pathetic water sources. This is water that mothers are bringing home to their children only to get worms, other waterborne diseases, cholera, extreme diarrhea, and then to hear stories of death.

LIFE has been given an opportunity to bring these water filtration systems into the mountains so that when mothers bring water home to their children they're no longer bringing water that is killing their child, they can create water that brings life to their child.

I think you see the joy in their faces. It's going to bring so much joy to these homes that can provide clean water for their families. Again, we thank you so much for all the generous giving. It really is making a difference. God bless you.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I just from the bottom of our heart, and we're in the last days now of this time we've got to get the resources to drill 400 wells. We've already drilled 200. But now time is running out to get the other 200 and I'm just asking you to do it.

If you'd like to have John's book, it's in the bookstores. It's online. What a blessing it could be. Boy, I wish everybody that had challenges in their home and maybe didn't have a father, I didn't, maybe didn't even have a praying mother but you've got a Jesus that died for you, get this book.

If you gave a cup of water, you helped us to give these precious children and their families some clean water, and you'd like to have John Gray's book, we'll send it to you. You just ask for it.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to John. Really appreciate you, John. Bless you. Bless Lakewood! Bless all your outreaches. Bless you family in Houston. I was born in Houston! Born again in Houston. Married in Houston! Love you! God bless you. God bless all of you.