

10/16/17
Week 43: Transport LIFE
James and Betty Robison
Mark Batterson

James: Betty, I'm thrilled that we have Mark Batterson back. Mark is the age of our son, Randy so we consider it very, very young.

[Laughter]

We count it an honor to have all of the guests that God sends our way that we're able to pray for, to share their gift with our viewers all over the world, and be a part in the -- we believe God-anointed ministries and giftings that they have. Mark Batterson is gifted to communicate in the National Community Church in Washington, D.C. where he's been now for a long time. It's been amazing. But he began writing books while he was preaching and teaching at the church.

This one really and all of them are great -- this one, *Whisper*, how to hear the voice of God. I'm curious as to why he would pick that title. Is it because it's really difficult to hear and that's the only way he talks? I think we need to find out from someone who is gifted to help us all hear clearly the voice of God. Would you welcome mark Batterson back to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

Good to see you, buddy! You're looking good to hang out in Washington. Are you going to have the senate dressing this way?

[Laughter]

Mark: Don't hold your breath.

James: Now does your church dress casual?

Mark: It is. It is a suit-and-tie town Monday to Friday. Why don't we give them a break on the weekend?

James: One of the beautiful things that Robert Morris and I felt like we did for the church, we

were Baptist's strong voices and had the tie. We felt like we helped set the church free from bondage when we got rid of our ties. They thought how could they actually not preach in a tie and the whole crowd not leave? So now people come pretty casual. I think that's pretty cool that a dressed-up city could come to your church and feel comfortable just being casual.

Mark: It's pretty fun and we want people to come as they are. Of course, we reach people that folks would know who serve our government, hundreds of Hill staffers; and we have homeless friends, hundreds of them that attend our church, and everybody in between. We want them to come in and hear the good news of the gospel and walk out changed.

James: I know they are. It is amazing. Okay, let's talk about *Whisper*. You're not implying it is the only way God who can be in the whirlwind or speak with the sound of a roaring surf or thunder, you're not saying this is the only way we talk but I get by you choosing this title that there's something important about understanding the aspect of a whisper. Am I right about that?

Mark: I think so. I think the question is why does God speak in that still small voice, in that whisper? My theory, James and Betty is that when you speak in a whisper you have to get real close to the person who is talking. In fact, you have to get your ear right by their mouth.

When our kids were young, I'd sometimes play a little trick on them and I would speak in a whisper so that they would have to get closer and closer and then I'd trick them. I'd reach out and grab them and give them a big hug. I think that's one reason why God speaks in that whisper because we think hearing the voice of God is about hearing the voice of God but it is about intimacy, it is about getting close to God.

When you've been married a few years you begin to pick up on not just what the other person says but my wife doesn't have to say a thing anymore. She can just give me that look or that tone and I know what she is saying. The whisper piece is about a God who loves us so much that he wants to draw us close and he wants that intimate relationship with us. I think that's why God often speaks just above that threshold of hearing.

James: Do you think one of the reasons Jesus went alone on the mountainside or wherever the lonely place was, was to silence all the other sounds that were crying out and just tuning in to hear the voice of the one who loved him and the one he loved so deeply? Do you think that's what he was doing many times to just to pull away and hear clearly?

Mark: I think so. In the Old Testament why would Moses pitch the tent of meeting outside the camp? Well, I think in his case it was to get out of earshot from all the people that were complaining and grumbling. But this idea, "be still and know that I am God," there is so much white noise. It is harder and harder for us to find quiet places, places where there's stillness or

calmness. That's one key to hearing the voice of God.

One of the things I talk about in the book is it is so important that God has the loudest voice in our life. Sometimes that means turning down our own self-talk, which can tend to be negative or maybe it is the voice of criticism and that's all you hear -- or the voice of condemnation from the enemy. You've got to turn those voices down and then turn up the voice of God to make sure that that still small voice is the loudest voice in our lives.

Betty: I think too, the whisper of God is a lot of times to represent or show his tenderness towards us because sometimes when you're hurting, you don't need a shouting sound. You need the tenderness of God. And he says, "I love you and I'm here." It's like you hold a baby. What does a mother do when she brings her baby up close to her to whisper love. I think that's the way God is too.

Mark: His voice is so powerful. His voice can split the Red Sea. His voice can say, "Peace be still" and the storm stops. Four words, "let there be light" and he calls everything into existence. So his voice is so powerful but it would be a little intimidating if it weren't complemented by the fact that it is that gentle whisper. He woos us with a whisper.

James: Years ago, when I would try to share with our viewers about prayer, I tried to make it clear that prayer is a two-way conversation, it is not one-way. You're not doing all the talking. As a matter of fact, if you have communication it is two way. One person doing all the talking you're not communicating. You're just preaching and asking somebody to listen or you're doing whatever, lecturing.

But what I found, maybe maturity, maybe simply learning, the majority of my praying is listening. I really mean that. I may share something but oftentimes I'm saying, "God, what's on your heart?" And he knows I want to know, and he begins to share what's on his heart. I try to tell everybody the first thing on his heart is you. You're very much on his heart. He loves you so deeply. You need to hear that and know that.

Do you think I'm right about wanting to be still and give him the chance to talk; not just always pointing out my heart but pausing, meditating, waiting to see if he will share his heart with me? Do you think that's appropriate? Is that consistent with the book on how to do it now?

[Laughter]

Mark: We chatted a little bit about this idea that when I wrote *The Circle Maker*, a book on prayer, but really about talking to God, I think what I've discovered is that's one side of the coin; the other side is listening to God. And if you pin me down and said, "Which one is more

important?" I tell you what, it's listening to God.

I think that hearing his voice is the solution to 1,000 problems. We think we have relational problems, emotional problems, spiritual problems but I think they're hearing problems. Are we hearing the voice of God? Because if we are, that changes the equation.

So I think prayer isn't just about outlining our agenda to God, it is about getting in the presence of God, listening, "God, what's your agenda for me?" And then responding to it. And it does, it turns that monologue into a dialogue. Isn't it amazing that there is a God that wants to converse with us?

James: Absolutely! Anxious -- more anxious than we tend to be. You have great titles of chapters. You actually start by "The Bravest Prayer." I've got to wonder what in the world are you talking about -- the bravest prayer?

Mark: Well, July 2nd, 2016, I'm kicking off a series of sermons at our church, *Mountains Move* and I just feel this stirring to challenge our church to pray the bravest prayer. What I mean by that is a prayer that just seems so impossible, or maybe a prayer that you've prayed 100 times and God hasn't answered it.

I said to our church, "For me, the bravest prayer is that the Lord would heal my asthma." Now the reason why I say that is my earliest memory is an asthma attack. Probably three, four years old, I end up in the emergency room and that happened night after night. Over 40 years there aren't 40 days that I didn't take an inhaler. I've been Code Blue, I've been in the intensive care unit a dozen times. For whatever reason the Lord just did not answer that prayer until July 2nd, 2016. "Pray that prayer one more time." It's been 427 days inhaler free. So praise God!

[Applause]

James: What moved you to go ahead and pray that bravest prayer? Was it after you were preaching on "Pray the Bravest Prayer"? You decided to go ahead and do it yourself? Or had you actually already prayed this prayer and seen the answer so then you went and tried to share it with the church? Tell me the process and I want to know when you prayed it, what happened? Did we have glory and angels?

Mark: There was not an angelic choir, believe it or not. But I will tell you that the next week we sang a worship song, "Great is our God" -- "It is your breath in our lungs." I about broke down because I just had this hunch, I had this sense that God had done something.

Let's not make this all neat and clean, like even Jesus when he heals the man who is blind, he

does it twice; right? Sometimes it is a process. And sometimes I've found, you almost have to take that first little step of faith. So it just became evident to me that something has shifted, something has changed.

Can I just share one little piece of the back story? As an author, it's always fun doing the dedication.

James: Did you write it in the book?

Mark: Yes, I share that story in the book.

James: Spill the beans. Lead us out there.

Mark: I dedicate the book to a pastor who in August of 1984 prayed a prayer for me that the Lord would heal me and God didn't. Now this is going to sound crazy. He prayed that the Lord would heal my asthma and a miracle happened. The next morning I woke up, I still had asthma but all the warts on my feet were gone!

[Laughter]

I kid you not! And I thought, what happened between here and heaven? Like there's someone somewhere who is breathing great but still has warts on their feet. It made no sense.

But the Lord whispered -- he whispered -- he whispered to me as a teenaged kid and I heard his voice. He said, "Mark, I just wanted you to know that I'm able." I held on to that for more than three decades. So I dedicate that book. I say, "A prayer that you prayed," he is now in his 90s, "A prayer that you prayed in August of 1984, God answered on July 2nd, 2016. That whisper, I held on to it." Hold on to those whispers. Those whispers will change your life.

James: Isn't that good? Don't you just appreciate the insight? I don't know if you want to jump on another one of the topics that -- you pick one if you want to. I can start reading titles here but is there something you want to address?

Mark: I think it is important for us to say that I talk about seven languages and I call them love languages. As you said, Betty because they're all love languages. Some are harder to hear than others but I think it is important to say that scripture is our first language. That's our Rosetta Stone, that's the revealed word of God inspired.

But in scripture, God speaks in different ways. So I talk about six secondary languages, desires; if you delight yourself in the Lord he will give you the desires of your heart. Doors, dreams,

people, he speaks through other people, promptings, that's a fun one right there.

Have you found that the Holy Spirit has an elbow?

[Laughter]

And sometimes puts it right in your rib.

James: He has a whistle too he'll blow. And one time I told Betty, I said, "You tell me all this stuff of the Holy Spirit. Are you trying to be the Holy Spirit?" I said the Holy Spirit will blow a whistle on her. He said, "I've been blowing a whistle. I burned the ball out a long time ago." Now she's going to have to step up.

[Laughter]

Mark: Hey listen! On that note I just have to say how much I love and appreciate my wife. Sometimes I have a hard time discerning between her voice and the voice of the Holy Spirit. They sound an awful lot alike and I'm grateful talking about people speaking into our lives.

That last one is pain. I just felt like --

James: You called it "a joy stick" here.

Mark: And there is a powerful story that is too long to share in this context but I tell you what, there is joy even in the midst of pain and trial and sorrow. It was C.S. Lewis who said, "God whispers in our pleasure but he shouts in our pain." I found -- listen, you can leave your Bible sitting on the bedside table and never pick it up but you can't ignore pain. Sometimes the Lord uses pain to speak in such a loving way.

The Lord has blessed me to go to some pretty amazing places and do some pretty amazing things. When you're in the Grand Canyon, God whispers. He paints those walls pink and purple with the sunrise. It is absolutely majestic. But as you said, where have you heard God's voice the clearest, the loudest? Well, probably after two days on a respirator, fighting for my life after emergency surgery when I should have died. And God spoke to me in that hospital room and I heard his voice. So I'm grateful that God speaks even through our pain.

My goal with the book is just to help folks. Listen. Learning to hear the voice of God is like learning any language. I took three and a half years of Spanish --

[Laughter]

Yo hablo un poco Espanol. I could never roll my R's so I parra sounds pretty pedestrian coming out of this mouth. It's hard to learn a language. It is hard! Learning these seven languages, I'm not saying it is easy, but that's how you begin to discern God's whisper and how much he actually loves us.

James: Don't you love the way this man communicates? Thank you, Mark. Listen. He says it right and I don't want to diminish his effectiveness here but there's a greater anointing. And the first time we talked, he told me, "I feel like this is my greater anointing." And boy, it is a labor of love to pen what is flowing in your heart, and then look at it and see if it is really expressing what God's poured in your heart. Well, he does it so well.

Mark, I just want to say a prayer for those of you right now who hurt and you say, "Well, the pain I got doesn't feel like a joy stick." Lord, I just want you to talk to them. Whatever it is, and I want you to let them know how much you love them. And just show them anything you want them to hear and know because you're just a great God and Father. I ask you to heal the pain just like you healed Mark's asthma -- and just do it. But Lord, above all I ask you to help people to hear your whisper, your voice; in Jesus' name.

Mark, I really appreciate it. We're asking our viewers to hear God's voice coming through missionaries that we've just had such a joy of helping. Our viewers, to me, the greatest people in the world because you watch us every day and we ask you to help somebody. You say, "You're always helping us. You bring in all these people to help us." Thank you because that's what we want to do because the program is dedicated to you but we always ask you to love a neighbor, to reach out and touch someone with the love of God -- and you do it, you're the most amazing people.

I want you to listen to what the missionaries have asked us for. They've asked us for trucks and vehicles, 71 of them, over a million dollars and they say, "We've got to have them now." That's just what they told us. They said, "We think we can tell you because you'll just tell the people and the people will pray and they will obey."

I want you to listen. Would you please? Because this really is the way you send the gospel. You have to send it, that's the bottom line. Watch closely.

On the mission field

[Vehicle engine trying to start]

Announcer: It's difficult to get anywhere without reliable transportation and it's never more

important than when the hearts, lives, and souls of so many are depending on it.

LIFE Outreach's mission is to go and share the transforming truth of God's love in word and deed to a hurting world. Whether our missionary partners are leading someone in prayer to receive Christ, helping rescue children from human trafficking, delivering relief goods, providing medical help or drilling water wells they're all part of sharing the gospel and they all depend on some form of transportation to successfully complete their mission. And when their vehicles can no longer meet the challenge because they are simply worn out and in constant need of repair, the missionaries work will suffer but more importantly is knowing that the people will suffer.

David: These precious children that are seated around me today, they've never had anything but water out of the rivers and canals. So today we have a great opportunity to provide them with clean water. But we need transportation. We need to upgrade our vehicles. We need other vehicles so that we may continue to drill wells throughout this country. Thank you so much!

Announcer: Without the proper transportation all of our efforts to help those in need can be severely hampered if not completely shut down. Transport LIFE is our way of keeping the pipeline open for the love of Jesus to flow forth in word and deed.

End of clip

In the studio

James: The missionary you were just listening to, David Heady was saved in our Owensboro, Kentucky crusade some 40 years ago. He was the biggest electrical contractor in the area. When he came to know the Lord his life was totally transformed and within just a short time, more than 30 years ago, he went to Haiti and planted his life there.

Betty, in the last year David nearly died and it was just a matter of not too many months ago I'm praying with him and talking to him and he's just amazing. I said, "You going to go back?" He said, "I can hardly wait."

I just found out David just made those video clips that you've seen this week. He's already back and he looks good. It's miraculous.

This is the love of God. When these missionaries who have left everything, when they move there, they move there -- that's it! It's not like they didn't have a good life but they went to share the life of God. And we make it possible, people just like you. And Betty and I are mission supporters big time and *LIFE Outreach*, that's what we're about, reaching out to you and

reaching out to the overlooked.

We need over \$1 million for those 70 vehicles. I'm asking God to touch your heart and you give the best you can right now. We just have a short period of time, a block, that we need to deliver and so we need your help. We have some gifts to send you to say thank you and I'm asking to you make the gift God puts on your heart.

Father, would you lead every person right now to just know they're giving life and love right now and these vehicles that are so critically important to deliver goods, to move children, to reach people, to take the missionaries, to take equipment, to take food, to take water, to take drilling equipment, everything! And Lord, please right now touch people's hearts and impress them to give compassionately; in Jesus' name.

There you see the website. Go on that website. Take your bankcard and use it or dial the number that's always there as a prayer line, always ready to pray with you and for you. Use your bankcard, use it like a check. Make the gift God puts on your heart. Thank you so much for doing it.

On the mission field

Announcer: It's a missionary's nightmare, having lifesaving relief supplies in your hand and no way to get it to those who are suffering. Some of the vehicles so vital to our outreaches are completely worn out and must be replaced. And in some critical areas no transportation is available at all. *Life's* mission partners have immediate and urgent needs to transport lifesaving supplies to children and families in remote locations. An additional 1.1 million dollars is needed to purchase 71 vehicles, large and small. Your gift of \$40, \$80, \$120, or \$1000 will help purchase these vehicles and provide lifesaving food, clean water, medicine, and the good news of Jesus to people in need.

With your gift of any amount, be sure to request *The Sweetest Name* classic hymns CD with a booklet containing the history behind the hymns for all twelve songs.

With your gift of \$120 or more, please request the NIV Super Giant Print Reference Bible, ideal for anyone looking for a Bible that's gentle on the eyes.

Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1000 or more to help transport life. And you may request our beautiful Determined Eagle bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, we like to also not only say thanks and send the gifts we mention but if you'd like to have Mark's book, how to hear the voice of God, *Whisper*, you bless others because you heard God touch your heart. You may have heard it through a speaker or a guest but he touched your heart. But you say, "I want to hear God clearly." I think this will help you. So you help us meet the need those missionaries have and we'll say thanks if you'd like to have it, along with other gifts.

Would all of you here join Betty and me saying thanks to Mark Batterson. You're going to be back now in another program with John Eldredge. That's going to be good. Mark and John Eldredge -- that's going to be quite a show! Don't miss it.

Thank all of you. Thank you!