

10/30/17
Week 45: Transport LIFE
James and Betty Robison
Dan and Hazel Hall

James: You don't want to miss one second of what you're about to have an opportunity to see. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. This program is about life.

We're going to introduce you to a young man who grew up with our oldest daughter, Rhonda from the time they were about three years old, Easter egg hunts, birthday parties. Very much a real stud guy as a teenager and a real strong guy and a typical teen that would cause us to do a little extra praying sometimes, including the girl he grew up with playing, she did some praying.

But he's got an incredible family, six kids, a beautiful wife, married a pastor's daughter, Bill Anderson's daughter, pastor of First Baptist Euless. Also, in Clearwater, Florida, Tampa, Clearwater area. This young man fell because of a blood clot in his lung, passed out.

Would you welcome Dan and Hazel Hall to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

I love you, buddy!

Dan: Love you too, Brother James. Thanks for having us.

James: Tell us what happened because you're in some kind of event in Houston; you're at the hotel. Tell us what happened.

Dan: Well, I had arrived into Houston late. I'd been serving the last ten years as a coaching consultant to churches and organizations. I had a client church call me at the last minute; I hadn't intended to go so it had been a little bit of a rigorous trip. I arrived late that night. Got into the hotel room about midnight, crawled into bed and woke up in the middle of the night; needed to go to the restroom.

As I was trying to get back to the bed I really began to get faint. All of the sudden my head began to hurt and the next thing I knew I was waking up. I thought I had slept really well. It had

turned out -- in fact, when I woke up, in the milliseconds I thought wow, that was a great night's sleep. But what had happened was I had passed out, pulmonary embolism, had fallen face first, hit a doorknob on the way down and then landed face first into the wall, slid down the wall and landed with my face in the crack between the wall and the floor face down in the carpet.

As I lie there began to realize what was going on. I couldn't breathe. My 285 pounds were sitting on top of my lungs and my mouth was buried in the carpet. And I was in a bit of a mess in that moment. So part of the problem was that I couldn't -- when I realized I was having a hard time moving, actually the events in my head were, I slept so well I'm numb. So I started trying to move an arm. And thought, man I slept so good the other side is numb. Then it began to dawn on me, I'm paralyzed. Now that felt like ten minutes but it was probably two seconds.

I realized I couldn't breathe. With my mouth in the floor I'm trying to get gasps of air but I can't because my head is face down I can only breathe out of the side of my mouth so I'm trying to breathe this way and I can't get air in my lungs.

As I'm lying there somebody asked me one day, early on, "Man, I bet you really started praying."

James, I've always been a little scared of that question when I get asked, especially early, because I know what they're wanting me to say and I know probably what I should say. I grew up in church. I know the answer. I felt like the third grader in the Sunday school class when the teacher asked, "What's brown, has a furry tail and eats nuts?"

And the little kid raises his hand and said, "Well, I know the answer is Jesus but it sounds like a squirrel to me."

[Laughter]

That's the way I felt.

I thought, I know you want me to say, "Yeah, I really began to pray and began to seek God." But instead as I lay there, as I began to pray, I couldn't think of what to pray. I'd accepted Christ as a child; that was a settled issue. I didn't need to settle that issue. I couldn't think of any big sins that I needed to deal with. Since then my wife gave me a list that I need to consider next time around.

[Laughter]

"You might want to run through this list."

[Laughter]

But I just began to say... I realize I couldn't bargain with God. What was I going to say to God? God, if you'll keep me alive I'll do something big for you. There was no bargaining. God is God. I don't know what I believe about a lot of stuff but what I do know is he doesn't need me. He's fine. He's done all this without me.

So I was kind of at this resignation of well, I guess this is it. I can't breathe, I can't get air in, I can't scream for help. I have no idea what time it is. I don't know what is going on. I think it is about two in the morning but as I'm lying there it dawns on me and said this out loud in my head, out loud, "God, I know you don't need me but my kids do."

James, as I was lying there on the floor I began to fight with everything in me to stay alive for those kids. I have six children, three grandchildren and I found myself on that floor face down trying to breathe in, one gasp -- it took me about three gasps to get my lungs with enough oxygen and then I would try to cry for help but I couldn't. Then I would think about one of my children and I would run this picture through my head and I would try to yell and then I would breathe in again. And I would breathe in and I would think about a kid and then I would breathe out. I did this all night for seven hours trying to stay alive just to see my kids again. That's all I was living for.

Somebody said, "I bet you wanted to live for the glory of the Lord."

James, I do want to live for the glory of the Lord but in that moment, the glory of the Lord to me was to make it to my kids another day.

So seven hours later I hear a knock on the door. I don't know how much time I had left. I don't know if I had five minutes left, I don't know if I had an hour left, I knew I was running out of energy but I didn't know if I could keep breathing. I heard a security guard shout out my name, "Mr. Hall!"

The last I remember was he said, "Somebody call 911."

I woke up sometime later in I.C.U. A series of events happened in there. I woke up to my wife standing there with me. She had flown in from Mississippi. She got the call, "Your husband is unresponsive." She had to get on an airplane and fly to Houston not knowing what she was going to land in the middle of. She brought no clothes. She literally got on a plane and flew down there. And that began this journey, just a little over a year ago in August of last year.

James: I want Dan to tell us and we'll touch him and I'm really hoping there will be times

you'll come back and you'll expand on all the things God gives you because I really think he wants you to. But when you found out the condition he was in and then you really found out the severity of it, what was going on in your heart and mind? Because you've really become the caretaker. The things he said to me when I'm talking to him about you is like you were an angelic being, which in so many ways that's what you've been. So what was going on in your heart when you realized exactly you were dealing with here? What had happened?

Hazel: My mind went white when I got the call. It was a regular day, finishing up the housework before I got to work and then you get that call. My brain just went white. My daughter, my 26-year old lives near us. I called her. She helped me get on the plane. At some point on the plane I thought, I need to get in the word. I need to find some direction, some something and I didn't have my Bible with me but I did have my notebook of sermon notes still in my purse. So I just started going through them, and of course, most of them were from Dan. So I was finding encouragement in those words from him.

One of them that stuck out to me actually was he had taught on "To train up a child." Our kids are almost grown but then I thought, I am training them in this moment. So I immediately started a group text with my kids, that we all needed to, of course pray for his survival and whatever we were going to face we would face it together and with the Lord.

James: Dan, tell me and expand on anything you want to but can you tell us those five things you feel like the Lord has told you he wants you to share that are important.

Dan: When I came out of that I began to think about the event itself. I was still in rehab. I spent three weeks in I.C.U. First three days they didn't know if I was going to live. I had breathed in so much carpet fiber they couldn't get my lungs cleaned out. As a pulmonary embolism landing in an I.C.U. with a respirator, I was given a 20% chance to live. So we were already fighting against the odds. They had to do six bronchoscopies in ten days to try to get my lungs cleared out, which is really unheard of. So we were fighting all along.

I didn't know how bad I was. We were in the Texas Medical Center in Houston. We were in the second busiest trauma center in America. I was actually in the room that they had Gabby Giffords after she was shot in Arizona. After two weeks my wife asked the doctor, "Tell me where we are. What's going on?" He said, "Well, ma'am, you need to understand. He is still the sickest man in our unit. We're not sure what is going to happen." So for us, it was a pretty touch-and-go for a long time.

What I'm so grateful about is how we were surrounded by community. First of all it was my family. And when I talk about five things that the Lord has really shown me, the first one is that relationships are the WD-40 of life. I grew up there were two things we had in our house, we

had WD-40 and what else? Duct tape; right? If it was loose you sprayed -- I mean if it was loose you taped it and if it was stuck you sprayed it.

[Laughter]

So what does WD-40 do? It loosens up things that you need. We go through things in life whether we know God or not. We go through things whether things are going well or not. Life can just be tough. The thing that makes it go easier are healthier relationships. I was so grateful for our marriage, I was thankful for our family, I was grateful for the churches that surrounded us.

For all the problems in the church, it has an amazing ability to heal itself when it wants to. It doesn't have to be ravaged with spiritual AIDS. It really can create its own antibodies. It really surrounded us.

So I remind people, look, relationships are so critical. If you'd asked me at 25 what I thought success in life would have been, at the time I was pastoring a church. I've had the privilege of pastoring three growing dynamic churches, but at 25, if you had said, "Dan, what do you think success would be?"

I would have said, "Well, to pastor a big church; to have a lot of people; to have my own TV show, sitting next to my wife being able to interview people."

[Laughter]

And all those things that we think success are. Right?

At 50, on my 50th birthday somebody asked me, "Do you feel like life is what you want it to be?"

I said, "Here's how I know life is what I want it to be. All my kids still want to come home for Christmas."

I think man, that is life. When the family matters. My children dropped everything and came to Houston. They stayed. We had to make them go back to work, make them go back to school, make them go back to what they were supposed to do.

I'm grateful for my marriage. We've been happily married for 23 years. Been married 30, but we've been happily married for 23 years.

[Laughter]

And when we're navigating through this and I look up and I see her and there is no one else I want there, I'm absolutely fine seeing her face. She didn't tell me until seven weeks in how bad I was. How bad the injury was. She just protected me from it. She just wanted me to be encouraged and she carried all that weight by herself and with other people around her. So I'm so grateful for that.

I remember when we got married, I like to tell the story that the preacher that married us -- which happened to be my father-in-law, so it did have some leverage. But I told them, "I want to write my own vows."

He said, "You can't."

I was a little offended by that. I was 22, I knew what I was doing. I said, "Well, why can't I?"

He said, "Well, Dan, you really don't know what you're talking about."

Now I got real offended because I mean I listened to Lionel Richie, I knew what love was.

[Laughter]

I said, "Why can't I write my vows?"

It was a contentious moment. He looked at me and with all seriousness, I'll never forget, I've used this in all my pre-marriage counseling since then. He looked at me and he said, "For better or worse, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, 'til death do you part." He said, "You can't beat that."

I learned through this, "For better or worse, sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, to death do you part." You can't beat that. And I found that through this. And I'm so grateful that my wife and I, we had a date every week for 30 years. We went on a date from the time we got married, through all the kids. When we couldn't afford a date, we would go out on a date. We would walk through the mall and call it a date. We would go shopping. We never went buying, we always went shopping.

[Laughter]

But we had that time alone. I was so grateful for that time. I was grateful for friends, for the church.

So I know that's one of our big lessons, is that relationships matter. Don't take them lightly. I tell men, "Chase your wife in the right way. Pursue her, love her."

James: Can you tell us the next four, just tell us? And this is not Oprah, I know you may have thought it was but it's not. We don't have as much time as she does. But I want to hear those other four. Because you're going to come back and expand on them.

Dan: That joy is the strength that gets us through the most difficult circumstances. If laughter does good like medicine, we need to laugh more. My wife puts it this way, "Find the funny." And so we have really tried to find the funny. So through this whole thing we were just making fun of things the best we could.

One of the doctors came in one day and asked me, said, "Mr. Hall, how are you doing?"

I said [mumbling].

And she said, "Pardon me?"

I said – [mumbling].

She looked at Hazel and said, "How long has he been like this?"

She said, "Dan!"

Well, there was nothing wrong with me. Everybody was so serious, I thought we needed to lighten this room up.

[Laughter]

You act like somebody is about to die or something. So you find the joy in the moment.

The second thing I would add or the third thing is that but how do you get that joy? I believe it is through gratitude. Gratitude is the pathway to joy. You don't get joy by walking down an aisle. You don't get joy -- you get joy by cultivating it, by being grateful for what you do have rather than angry or frustrated about what you don't have. We went in every day in I.C.U. with our wins. Whatever it was that day, we actually got ice cream or the blood pressure stabilized or somebody came by and we would just enumerate those.

The fourth one is, James, I don't know why this happened. I have everybody trying to tell me

why and I'm grateful for that. People are well-meaning. I've had some of my friends say, "God's making a larger platform for you." Or "God did this to show his glory." Or "The devil is trying to take you out." Whatever! And they're always try to give an answer.

Someone said, "Why do you think this happened?"

I said, "Well, I had a pulmonary embolism and I hit a wall."

[Laughter]

That's the best answer I can give. So what I took out of that, James was this. It is far more important how I respond to uncertainty than whether I explain the uncertainty. It doesn't matter why I'm in this chair. I'm in the chair. I've got to decide what I'm going to do about being in this chair. And there is so many of us that we don't know why it happened. I don't know why the divorce happened. I don't know why the bankruptcy. I don't know why your friend betrayed you. I don't know why your church split. I don't know that I can give you an answer. But I can tell you this: You've got to decide what to do with it. I've got to decide what to do in this chair.

Then the last thing is it is all about grace. I don't think I deserve this. I don't think I didn't deserve it. I don't think it has anything to do with favor or not favor. If this world came down to who deserved what, Robin would still be alive and Al-Qaeda would be history. This life isn't just -- I don't get it.

One of my mentors used to say, "The books don't balance in this life but they do balance."

James: I just want to say that you are one of my heroes with all my heart. Would you pray for a kid who grew up with your kid and you see the greatness of God all over you. Just thank him for showing us Jesus.

Hazel, thank you. And all you kids, thank you. Thank you for showing us Jesus. God, let the church show the world, the living Jesus like Dan is. To you be the glory.

Would all of you in this audience say Dan, thank you for showing us Jesus tonight? We just praise God.

And then let me just say this to you, all of you watching, the missionaries asked us for 71 trucks and vehicles and we didn't know they needed it. So I'm just saying this to you. Let's give those missionaries what they asked for. Here's a little clip. I wanted you to hear all we could of Dan. I'm just going to ask you to do it. Okay? Let's give them those trucks.

On the mission field

Announcer: For many years now, as part of our Rescue Life campaign, *LIFE Outreach* has partnered with a ministry in Southeast Asia called ZOE International. Together we have rescued many children from the dangers of human trafficking, and also have built a Life Center that provides a loving home for these children.

>> We are rescuing children from human trafficking giving them a fresh start at life. Each and every weekday we are taking over 50 children to and from school in a vehicle that is over 14 years old, and it is on its last legs. It's been through the wringer. We are in desperate need of a vehicle that we can rely on to keep our children safe.

>> ZOE Children's Home is located in the mountains and the road to the schools is steep and winding. It is especially dangerous during the rainy season.

Announcer: In addition to caring for the children at the Life Center, our mission partners also minister in remote villages in the area. The goal is to educate the children and their families about human trafficking and how to avoid becoming a victim of a trafficker.

>> We travel to remote villages located in the mountains and jungles to bring them the good news of Jesus Christ. When necessary, we take all the equipment needed to hold a meeting including generators, sound, and video equipment, lighting, stages and tents.

We currently transport our equipment in three old pickup trucks, each of which has been driven nearly 250,000 miles on rough terrain. A heavy-duty six wheel truck would help us to more effectively bring the gospel to many who are hungry for God's touch.

>> Please ask God what he would have you do to not only help ZOE but life's other partners around the world who are in need of dependable transportation. God bless you!

End of clip

In the studio

James: God bless you sweet missionaries. If you've heard Jesus through Dan Hall and through Hazel, you've seen him. I don't need to say anymore.

If you want to help the missionaries keep helping people they need some vehicles. It doesn't have a lot of emotion attached to it but it is the only way they can deliver the goods, carry the people,

rescue people. And they said, "Would you help us?" Please do.

Make the call. We have some gifts to bless you with. You've been blessed today because we come on every day to share *LIFE Today* so let's share it around the world. Go online, or make the call. Make the gift God puts on your heart. Thank you 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.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: This has been one of the most powerful moments I've ever experienced and I'm glad we could share it with you. Just can't tell you how much I love this kid. And he's still a kid to me. Even though he is in his 50s, he's still a kid. He's going to come back and we're going to flesh out all the things God wants him to share with us.

And Dan Hall, still on course, that's his website if you want to know -- you might want to bring

him to a big secular convention or some church gathering but whatever you do, if you do, you love him and take care of him and his family because you love him. But listen to me, he is full of Jesus.

Would you all join us in saying thanks to Dan Hall? Thank you, Hazel! We're so proud of you. Love you so much. Can't put it in words. Thanks for watching. You saw *LIFE Today*!