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Week 53: Fall Mission Feeding, Last Week

James and Betty Robison

Peter and Ann Pretorius

James: Oh boy! Betty, we have some special friends.

Betty: We really do!

James: Who have we got?

Betty: Peter and Ann Pretorius, our missionary friends that we've just grown to love and share ministry with through the mission field.

James: Well, you know they actually were part of changing our lives about 30 years ago when we saw love in action so clearly that it was something that was contagious in a glorious way. Betty and I came back here seeing a very legitimate need, undeniable, and what a little bit of love can do so easily, and the perfect cure, the perfect miracle. We came back not knowing what you would do. You overwhelmed us with the love of God.

Would you welcome Peter and Ann Pretorius back to *LIFE Today*? All the way from Johannesburg, South Africa. We have nice planes but it never gets any shorter. It's a long way.

Peter: It is a long way!

James: And we're just glad you're here. Peter, you tried to die a couple of times. We won't go into detail. You weren't really trying, you just did. You just died. And you're a miracle to be alive. So the prayers have been answered. You were dead long enough that your mind should have been gone. It is not. I know Ann can debate that a little bit maybe. But we know God did

just a miracle.

But I want to talk about the miracle of our coming together because when you took me and showed me what I would call poverty of the most extreme possible and you showed me what just lack of food and proper nutrition does, there's no way to describe it. It so shocked me that I said, "Man, we may move over and help you." And you weren't unkind but you made it very clear, well, don't stay over here. Go back. Get us help so we can do the work and not be empty handed. That's basically the message.

So we came back after going over and going with you into the pit of hell and then seeing what love can do, we came back. That's been 30 years.

Tell me your impression of the miracle that happened with that connection and us coming back and talking with the people who are watching us right now all over the world. What happened?

Peter: You know I've been through that experience James where 30 people are starving to death a day. I was there ten days and more than 300 people died of starvation. For me, that was extremely traumatic. I came back and we managed to put together three truckloads of food, which we took up a convoy.

And when we got it there and we distributed the food, it was gone in like two hours. One ration to every person and the food was finished. I came to the instant realization that I cannot do this thing on my own. I've said to the Lord, I can't do this on my own. It is not possible. I don't have the money, I don't have the means. I have the willingness. There is a desire in my heart to help. I can't take seeing children die of starvation but I can't do this on my own.

It was just a little while after that that God sent you on your mission to South Africa and we met. From then it's been this partnership that has saved the lives of at least 13 million children.

James: It is like all heaven broke loose. Instead of all hell breaking loose, it was already there. Ann, your impressions when you saw it because the connection was miraculous.

Ann: It really was miraculous and it was an answer to our prayers because we realized that you had influence and an audience that we don't have. And it was a case of complementary gifting working together for the greater purpose for the kingdom of God. Because what you could do and what we could do were opposite and yet we could be united in purpose and vision and compassion as God knit our hearts together for that greater purpose.

And 30 years later it's been totally miraculous to see what God has done. And on top of all of the hard work and the results, we've got great relationship and wonderful friends.

James: Well, you really are.

Betty: Not only that but I know that every time we went over there to be with you and we went through and saw the different places, just nothing there and children starving, some of them dying, we had to experience that too and it was so sad.

But when we would get back home, James and I would just kind of look at each other and say I know we were over there to be a blessing because we could come back and share our hearts and people would help but we always came back feeling so honored and so blessed that God chose us to be a part of what he wanted to do over there. So we always felt that way. We got the blessing.

Peter: We understand that because it's been such a blessing for us and the privilege to be able to help the poor. I think it is the biggest service you can do in the kingdom of God.

James: It's to the least of these, the overlooked, the forgotten.

Peter: And you know the thing that's developed with us over years, James and I really thank God for the opportunity to talk about these things because one of the things that's been a major blessing for us is that I've always known that I can call on you. When we've been through really, really tough times and we've come against things that need instant attention I can call on you.

I've understood that the kind of people that you have helping you through the program, they're people who will respond. I knew that we wouldn't go away empty handed because I knew that James' supporters won't let us down. And time and time again, that's been the truth. So it's not only been a partnership and a relationship with you and Betty, it's kind of gone beyond that and we've really experienced the love and the compassion of people who support your ministry.

James: Well, it's just thousands and thousands of people but it is one person at a time. The people look and they see and they meet the needs. So the miracle that's happened is like you said, it is the viewers. When one person says "I'll take three kids," "I'll take five kids," "I'll take ten kids, I'm going to help you," Peter, that's the miracle -- that's the miracle of love. You talk about, Ann, about us being brought together with our unique differences and yet they're important differences and we come together like a healthy body connected and all the body parts work if we're submitted to the right head, that's the way the church is supposed to work. We're trying to inspire the whole church to work that way.

So okay, we've been doing this for 30 years. What are your hopes? You told me when you and I had a meal here just recently, you said that we've registered -- you just mentioned a while ago 13 million or more kids' lives saved, physically from starvation, but we've registered -- this is where they signed up, got material, over how many millions?

Peter: Just under 12 million.

James: 12 million people have committed. Do y'all think that's amazing? When you say that's a pretty good deal to save 13 million lives, how about 12 million people saved for eternity? So to say that Mission Feeding is effective is almost an understatement.

So tell us where we are today. What are you praying for right now? Because I know you see what's out there. You've told me that you've been training teams for years. We've been helping you do that. We never even talk about it we just do it. We told people a time or two we're going to train people in the language and teach them to go out and win people to Christ; we're doing that. But right now, what do you want our viewers to hear that they would take to heart and say

step up in prayer and step up in support? What do you want to see happen right now? What's on your heart?

Peter: Firstly, James, that we can get into every country in Africa with the gospel. My only frustration is that we don't have the money to expand because we have the ability. We have the ability to train new teams. We can take that gospel model we're using into every country, in their language. And we have 50 hours of discipleship.

And then second, that it still absolutely hurts me in my heart when children starve to death. Now I honestly believe with all my heart it is the right of every child to at least have one good meal a day.

James: And really, it's all it takes to stabilize. Because of the balance that you put in, we're asking our viewers to help us upgrade the food factory. You know we've built several of them together, our viewers. And the one I know you're talking about is a very important one, and to be able to upgrade and produce more food rapidly, you continually improve the quality based upon the need in the area by getting the right nutrient in that particular area to meet their needs. So we've asked for \$216,000. What I hear... and I pray that. We're coming to the year end and make great year-end gifts; \$1,000 for some of you is huge. Some of you can give \$10,000 or more. I pray to God you will. What better place could you put it than changing lives? We need that upgrade.

But when you were talk being about that a moment ago and I'm thinking okay we've got 400,000 kids that you've located right now. Now some of them are just starting up in their area, we're just brand-new to them if we can get the support, but you've got others who are already there and beginning the process. But it needs to be continued for months; sometimes it needs to be continued for years. Then we move into the schools and get the kids going to school, feed them there once a day. So the whole process is just miraculous.

Wouldn't it be great right now if all the viewers just listening to your heart cry would just say, "I tell you what, I want to step it up." You're going to get inundated today because there is not a

single person in Australia, not a single person in the United Kingdom, nobody in South America or Canada or the United States, not one person watching that wouldn't say, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Would it be amazing if every person who says I know God, he is father, I believe in Jesus. I believe in prayer. I've heard a missionary's heart, not one child and I'd say, "I'm going to step up. And today, dear God, I'm going to make a gift." -- Every single one of you.

Peter, I have an idea that I'll be able to call you by the end of the year and say, "Peter Pretorius, how many more countries do you want to try to get this year?" And when you tell me I want to be able to say, "We're going to be able to help you."

Now Peter, this couple here, we're pretty nice folks. Would you say we're probably pretty good givers of our time and our abilities and our resources? Would you say that?

Ann: Oh yes!

James: We've always been one of the more faithful supporters of this ministry and our church. Let me just ask this. Would it be wonderful if we could just say we saw one of the greatest miracles the worlds ever seen? Not only the miracle that you had a heart attack, [unintelligible] shut down, everything is gone, everything is -- just gone! And here you are. And we can say, "Well, that's a pretty big miracle."

Well, what if we said, "Peter, how about God fulfill not only your dreams but his dream? Wouldn't it be great if we would love each other like he prayed we would and the world would know we were his disciples because of the way we love each other, because we love him with all our heart and we notice the least of these?"

Jesus said, "This is the sheep." He said, "When you did it to them, you did it to me."

How many of us have ever wished I could do something for Jesus? I wish I could bless Jesus. I wish I could give him some water when he was thirsty. Well, we can. We can give food, we can give water.

Father, I pray for every person watching, the miracle of these missionaries who just literally gave their lives to go to the ends of the earth, to march into hell for a heavenly cause and for us to be able to go with them. Lord, to know what it is to be held hostage, to be threatened, to be surrounded, to listen to bullets flying in every direction and know that you are our peace and our comforter. And we want to thank you that not one worker within our entire mission outreaches has ever been lost. That in itself, God is one of the most indescribable miracles I've ever heard of. And I have to believe it is because of prayers of people who are watching around the world. Lord, hear our prayer right now and lead every person watching to give the gift that you put on their heart; in Jesus' name I pray.

I really believe with all my heart God is speaking to you. Peter and Ann, in a moment I'm going to give all of our viewers a chance to respond. What do you feel in your heart as I made that appeal?

Peter: I feel that they're going to respond, James because if I could take everybody in the field, they could hold one of those kids, they wouldn't feed one.

James: They'd feed the whole village.

Peter: The challenge is to get people to understand, firstly, to understand the trauma of these kids, and secondly, to understand how simple the solution is to solve it.

James: Tell us your heart, Ann. I know what is going on inside of Peter and I know how you gave your life basically helping nurse him to health. But right now when you heard what your husband said a moment ago and what I just said, what do you feel in your heart?

Ann: I just want to see the multiplication, James because God has brought us in these 30 years to a place of having the model in place for multiplication. We've got a real sustainable model. We've been training people in every culture. The components from the farm are being used to produce the food in the factory. We're doing skills development. We're having a massive impact

on nations. And we've got new nations contacting us wanting us to replicate this model in their countries.

And the heart in Peter, although he was so close to not being with us, one of the things I've realized is the vision in him, the purpose in him, the passion and the drive to see this fulfilled is as strong as it's ever been. And his desire to just multiply -- the work is not done. And I just know that that is so much what's on the heart of Jesus as well is the work is not done.

But we're his hands and we're his feet. We're the finance, we're the means. We as the body of Christ are the means to be able to reach out and accomplish what Jesus came for. There's no greater privilege than to know that he is utilizing us. It might be for Peter and I and our team on the ground to be laboring and working hard but we love what we do. There are other people who can love what they do by writing a check, by donating, by praying, by participating in whatever way they can. But God puts it altogether into the most beautiful picture because in his heart he has the heartbeat that cares for each one of those little ones who are fighting and struggling and battling through to be able to survive.

Not only that, those that are lost -- that are wondering what is life really all about? We're living in these remote areas where our conditions are so bad, the quality of life is so poor. But they haven't connected with the savior yet.

James: When love walks in it overwhelms them. It's one thing to tell them about love it is one thing to show it. It's the gospel, the good news that transforms. How are they going to believe unless they hear? And how are they doing to hear unless they preach? Bottom line, Ann -- what you were just saying, bottom line, how they preach unless they're sent? Sent! That's what Peter was talking about a minute ago that we could go. It is the individuals, Betty that send.

You and I have gone to the mission fields. I've preached to millions of people. We've seen millions of people come to Christ even in our crusades and our outreaches. That's all wonderful. But hey! What's the bottom line? We were sent. We were sent not only by God, we were sent

by people who support us. We couldn't even have gone over to the mission field to help them if you hadn't sent us. We couldn't begin to do the things without us doing it together.

So Peter and Ann, we love you. We're going to be praying that God shows us a miracle right now. Would you just say, "Thank you God for Peter Pretorius and Ann Pretorius and all their family, their team, all the thousands of workers that are involved in the outreaches that we undergird and we support with our prayers and our finances" -- we, meaning you.

I want you to look at something right now. You're going to see Peter and Ann's son, Isak. So gifted. So talented. You're going to see him standing in an area where Betty and I stood in that same type situation years ago and we watched a miracle. I couldn't believe what I was watching with Isak.

Now listen to me. Right now you're the miracle. Yes, you are! I pray you'll simply do what God impresses you to do. Watch. Watch and pray and then simply do what God says and you will not only rejoice over it but miracles will occur now and for eternity. Watch.

On the mission field

Isak: We're in this village where they've really been suffering with bad drought. They've had no real rain here in the last year. You can just see how dry everything is. This is an area where they would normally plant crops but there are no crops being planted here. There is no food. There's also no life.

Announcer: In southern Africa drought and famine have deprived entire villages of food. For the mothers of children in these areas their only way of life is to plan for death.

Isak: Grave after grave after grave... for children who have a name, children who mean the world to their mothers and to their families, children who don't deserve to die simply because their village was ravaged by drought -- because they didn't have Mission Feeding. You see, we can stop children from filling these graves. We can bring the cycle of death to an end if we just act. You say, "But what do I do? How do I stop children from dying?"

This is how you do it. You open your heart, you give out of what you have, you give the best gift that you can give, you give Mission Feeding, you give life -- life in the form of a bowl of food that not only fills a stomach but empties a grave.

Please do it for the mother that doesn't want to lose another child. Do it for the children that don't deserve to die.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, I'm so grateful for Isak! And I know what it's like to be there because I've been there too many times and I've watched too many of these little graves dug right around somebody's little grass hut where they bury family members. And so often the graves are tiny.

Betty, I was thinking because we had a daughter fight for her life and lose the battle to cancer, the mother of three beautiful teenagers and I know you care, and you know how much that moves us. Only the miracle of God's grace can sustain us and even enable us to bear up.

But here's the point I want to make. Let's just say somebody had a child near you that had a problem, a disease and in your hand you had not a hope but the absolute perfect cure. Let's just say you'd heard about our Robin and Betty and I were there with her and you were just up the way and you knew you had in your hand exactly what would make our daughter well. I'm going to tell you something. I think you wouldn't even care if you'd get in a car, you would run. You would run in the room with us or anyone that was fighting to save their child and you say, "Here! Here it is. It is not hope, it is absolute. It is guaranteed. It is a miracle."

Well, I'm telling you and I'm not exaggerating, we're talking about a miracle that is as simple as just giving food -- just giving food. It will work. It will take a child so near death, their little body emaciated, so thin that a miracle needs to occur. I'll never forget Beth Moore praying so hard over that little boy and Peter having to say to Beth, "This one is not going to make it."

Beth Moore prayed over that child and went back and played soccer with that little boy two years later. It was a miracle. You know why the miracle occurred? Because somebody watching didn't just pray, they took what was in their hand and they gave.

So here's what I'm asking you to do. Help us upgrade the food factory. I pray you'll be one of 216 people who will give \$1,000. There are some of you here as we're getting year-end giving coming up, a great opportunity, I'm telling you, you can make a gift. And this is our last week right here, for the support for Mission Feeding and this emphasis comes to a conclusion. So we need a miracle and I'm praying for it.

If you could help us feed three, five or ten children, listen -- \$30, \$50, \$100, there is not one gift

too small. This may be your first time to ever do this. It may be that you've done it before, recently but I'm going to do it today because we're praying for a miracle. Whatever God's leading you to do, you call the number, go on the website, take a bankcard, use it like a check, make the gift God puts on your heart. If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail -- this last week, this year-end gift, whatever.

Father, I'm praying for the greatest outpouring of love we've ever witnessed. I pray that that there would not be one person that wouldn't say, "I have in my hand the miracle you must have," in Jesus' name.

Remember, that miracle is born in love, bathed in love, carried and delivered by love because those missionaries are full of love. Thank you right now for calling. Thank you for going online. Thank you for putting that gift in the mail. But call us and tell us what you're mailing. And may God richly bless you because you just blessed somebody big time.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In impoverished and famine-stricken areas of Africa, children are suffering. The need is great. And without food, they face death by starvation. With your support, you will help feed and care for children in crisis areas of Sudan, Angola, and Mozambique.

With Africa facing ongoing food shortages and drought, we urgently need to replenish supplies and come to the aid of 400,000 children counting on us. Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for the next three months. Please also consider an additional gift to help provide critically needed upgrades to our food factory that will increase overall production by a staggering 50%. This is a \$216,000 challenge above our normal feeding budget that could help save even more lives.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you *In the Middle of the Mess*. In her new book, Sheila Walsh brings insight to knowing the peace and presence of Christ in the midst of life's inevitable messes.

With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed and care for ten children, we will send you Sheila's book, plus the "Arise" coffee mug. This heat-activated mug reveals Isaiah 61 each time you fill it with a warm beverage; a wonderful way to begin your day.

And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our "Determined Eagle" bronze sculpture. This is the last week! Please call, write, or

make your gift online.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I just want to say thanks. You're going to love this cup because this old plain cup does what every Christian needs to do every day and that is arise and shine. This cup, you put something hot in it, it is going to look like that. Let's just get full of the Holy Spirit and arise and shine with the glory of the Lord on us.

Remember, this is the last week. Great time for year-end gifts.

I'd like for this audience, all of you, to just really give a great hand of appreciation to Peter and Ann Pretorius.

We love y'all. They love you. Betty and I love you. Thanks for putting God's arms around people that need to know love them. Thanks for saving lives.