

12/26/17  
**Week 53: Fall Mission Feeding**  
**James and Betty Robison**  
**Charlie Daniels**

**James:** This is just a joy to have you join us on *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have you watching -- and our guest. Charlie Daniels is just an amazing person. This is a fabulous picture of a fabulous guy. This is his memoir. He says here, "Never look at the empty seats." We've got to try to grasp what he wants us to get out of that.

And the chapters in here, good night! I have never seen so many chapters in a book. I mean I'm looking over here, Chapter 63. You say, "I'm going to read a book with 63 chapters?" Most of them are two and three pages so you can handle it. There are a few of them that are a little longer. And we're going to talk about one of the chapters; this is Chapter 40. By the way, there is not a dull chapter in here. The titles of the chapters...

I asked him, "Did somebody help you do this, Charlie?"

He said, "No. I just wrote it; wrote it all. Just there it is."

I said, "It is a miracle."

I mean the guy can flat write. But here's a chapter: "Heart of my heart, rock of my soul; you changed my life when you took control."

Some of you think, that must have been when he got married! Well, we're going to find out exactly what he was talking about. Would you welcome Charlie Daniels to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

Charlie, glad to see you, buddy. I've just got to tell you, when I found out, and you've been blessed so you've sent some really nice checks to *LIFE Outreach* and you signed your name. It wasn't any anonymous name, any fake stuff, and you helped us do what God's put on our heart.

Can I just ask you upfront, how long ago do you think you started helping us?

**Charlie:** I really don't know but I was tuned in. You were doing the segment on building the

wells -- digging the wells I guess I should say over in Africa. We take clean water for granted. We don't even think about it. We go turn the tap on and we've got plenty to drink, plenty to bathe in and everything. To think about somebody that don't even have water to drink, that's pretty...

**James:** Or if they have it it's so filthy you wouldn't give it to an animal.

**Charlie:** So it's a great work you're doing. I wanted to chime a little bit on it.

**James:** Well, it means a lot to us that you do it. And our viewers are the most amazing people. I've told you this. It is not just trying to be flattering to pump you up. It's to let you know that your sensitivity to God and to others and then your willingness to share what God has enabled you to enjoy, to oversee and then meet needs, thank you for doing it.

Charlie, you talk about never look at the empty seats. I want you to just tell us about anything you want us to hear in this incredible book because you are truly gifted. Tom Selleck, Dolly Parton, Sean Hannity all talk about how awesome you are like they never did anything.

[Laughter]

But you are! You're amazing. But what do you mean by "never look at the empty seats"?

**Charlie:** Well, it's kind of like a play on the old adage of accentuate the positive. When you're a young musician and you want to make it, and I did, I was very serious about it, you're going to play anywhere you can for anybody who is there for anything they will give you. So you're going to have a lot of empty seats because nobody knows who you are. A few people come out of curiosity or maybe they've heard one record on the radio or something. So you're going to walk in and you're going to have maybe a half house, maybe a third of a house, or whatever, but you cannot let the empty seats dominate what you're thinking because you go in.

If you say, "Well, I'm going to slough off tonight because we don't have a big crowd," you're cheating them, you're cheating yourself because you never look at the empty seats. You're concerned with the seats that are full. If you will address yourself to them and give the best show you possibly can every night, the next time you go back to town they're very apt to come back and bring somebody else with them. So you build a following that way.

And longevity was always one of my aims. I tried to do building blocks with my career where I could be around for a long time. After almost 60 years I think it's going to work.

[Laughter]

**James:** How old were you when you started?

**Charlie:** I cut the apron strings. I was playing semiprofessional before but I cut the apron strings in 1958 and I was, well, I would have been 22 years old.

**James:** How old are you now?

**Charlie:** I'll be 81 the 28th of this month.

[Laughter]

**James:** 81 years old, Charlie!

**Charlie:** I don't think it's funny.

**James:** It's great! My goodness, I'm 74, I'm chasing you. Listen. You taught yourself. You didn't take music lessons. How in the world did you do that?

**Charlie:** I went up to a friend mine's house one day. I had known him for a long time. I had no idea he had a guitar. I don't know where he had it, stuck back in a closet somewhere I guess and he just pulled it out one day. I went up there and he was playing it. He knew about literally two and a half chords. He could play G and C. And if he really put his fingers on there he could play a D.

I said, "You've got to teach me! I've always wanted..."

Here's my best friend playing a guitar. So anyway, long story short, he taught me what he knew and we started bugging anybody we could find that knew one more chord than we did. He would watch.

So anyway, I learned three chords. There is a chapter in that book called "Three Chords Changed My Life." When I learned three chords you could play a whole song with three chords. It was just about the greatest thing that ever happened to me.

**James:** Did you make up the songs or did you play something you heard?

**Charlie:** No, I was playing other people's songs. But there's country songs -- there's a lot of country songs that just has three chords in them so I could play all kinds of stuff. I just went nuts over it. I was ruined from that moment on. That's all I ever wanted to do. I did a lot of things before I finally got around to making a living playing music but that's all I really wanted to do.

It's all I want to do now.

**Betty:** Did you get discouraged though at times and think well, I need to learn to do something else?

**James:** She's moved over to her country tone there.

[Laughter]

**Betty:** Hey! I am country!

**James:** You done got this girl go country!

**Charlie:** I never really did because I loved what I do. I love entertaining people. When I first started playing this old guitar, it was old Stella guitar. The strings probably had never been changed on it. The depth was about the size of a half of a fence post. You can imagine somebody who had never played before trying to learn to play on that thing, and trying to get your fingers going. And your fingers get sore. You think, oh! I don't think. You just keep playing. You get those calluses on the end of your fingers and you play. But I never really could seriously consider giving it up at all. I had nowhere else to go, I had nothing else I wanted to do.

**James:** When did you get to fiddling? Start fiddling with the fiddle?

**Charlie:** I started fiddling with the fiddle --

**James:** Is that one of the chapters, "Fiddling with the Fiddle"?

**Charlie:** I wish I had thought of that.

**James:** You should have called me. We would have had fun.

**Charlie:** Next time I write, I'll give you a call. You can do a little research. I started playing mandolin a little bit and the fingerboard on a mandolin and the fiddle are the same. Of course, you pick one, you bow the other.

After I'd been playing mandolin for about probably a year or so somebody showed up with a fiddle one day and I had to get my hands on it and I started all over again. I squeaked and squawked. One of the kids I went to school with said when I played the fiddle it sounded like somebody stepped on a cat. Can you imagine my parents putting up with that? I'm sitting in the bedroom going [eeeeck aaanchk.] Because it is a tough instrument to learn, especially if you

don't take lessons.

And because of that, I hold the fiddle wrong, I hold the bow wrong and I press too hard on the fiddle bow, which gives me my sound. I sound a little bit different. I'm not a good different, I don't mean it like that but it is a little bit different.

**James:** Did you have to have lessons to learn how to talk kind of like a country singer?

**Charlie:** Never had to have no lessons to learn how to talk like this. And I ain't takin' none either!

[Laughter]

**James:** Let me ask you this, in all of your entertainment, what's the most fond memory? What do you just love to remember?

**Charlie:** I have so many of those. But I remember one night, we do a show in Nashville called the Volunteer Jam. We started 42 years ago. It's on a Saturday night and I was on stage and I looked over to my left and Roy Acuff who was one of my all-time heroes, I'd been listening to all of my life, and here Saturday night he was at the Opry. He had come in-between shows at the Opry because he knew it would just tear me up.

[Laughter]

So I said, "You've got to come out here! Come on out!"

So he came out and we did, I forget, "Take the Night Train to Memphis" and a few things. But it was like, it was just like somebody walking into a dream -- like your fondest dream. When I was a kid I listened to Grand Ole Opry and Roy Acuff, and all those guys were such heroes of mine. To imagine myself in Nashville, Tennessee standing on the stage on a Saturday night with Roy Acuff singing "Night Train to Memphis," that's the stuff dreams are really made out of; you know?

**James:** You and I have talked about a mutual friend, Johnny Cash. What did you think of him?

**Charlie:** Johnny Cash was a great man -- a truly great man inside, outside.

**James:** He was a miracle changed man.

**Charlie:** You were around him when he walked in a room, he just dominated the room. You

had to look over that way.

**James:** His hand was so big it was like shaking somebody's knee.

**Charlie:** Never thought about that.

[Laughter]

But I'll take your word for it.

**James:** Had to find some... But you also, with Glenn Campbell, Randy Travis has been here a lot. He's been here since the stroke.

**Charlie:** He's getting better.

**James:** Getting better and better and we're all praying for him. But you know, we just thank God, there is something about country music and country singers, they have some pretty crazy songs and write some pretty extreme lyrics but there seems to be an Americana, there seems to be something about them that it just causes you to have a sense of pride, a little bit like you have in the military. You sense that about them?

**Charlie:** Yeah. The country music community is a great community. We had in Nashville, I'm sure you're aware of it, about five years ago, a huge flood, they called it "the thousand years flood." It flooded the whole Opry house. It flooded Opryland complex, the hotel, everything. And people, we had 13 inches of rain in two days and it just knocked people out of their houses and stuff. This community came together and perfect strangers took people into their homes; of course, the donations for helping people and everything. But it is such a great community.

**James:** To me they're that kind of people that step up.

**Charlie:** It has that feeling -- family is what we're looking for, that family sort of feeling.

**James:** And you wrote a song about the devil going somewhere.

**Charlie:** He don't come here.

[Laughter]

**James:** Just tell me about that little deal.

**Charlie:** Well, it's called "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" and I wrote it... It sounds like it ought to be a fun song to a story but it's a pretty mundane simple story. We had done an album, written and rehearsed an album's worth of material for an album and went to the studio and started recording and we didn't have a fiddle tune. So we said, "We need a fiddle tune." So we took a break. Went into rehearsal studio and I had this line in my mind, "The devil went down to Georgia." I don't know where it came from. It just did. I had it there and we went in and sat down and started. The drummer played this, the piano player played that and I went off and wrote the lyrics to it and came back and we put the song together. As they say, "The rest is history."

[Laughter]

**James:** All right, let's talk about this Chapter 40: "Heart of my heart, rock of my soul, you changed my life when you took control."

**Charlie:** That is actually a line out of a song I wrote called "Heart of My Heart," is where that came from. That is a chapter about my faith. I was raised in a Christian family and all my life I heard "Jesus died for your sins." I believed it but I didn't know how to apply it to my life. And of course, when you're real little you don't question it. As you get older, you think, well, how's this supposed to work?

And then I got into all I heard was condemnation. I didn't hear about the love and the forgiveness. I got the opinion that the most mundane of human actions that some people deem to be sins that you lose your salvation. You get saved, you go out and you do something that is off color or something and you lose your salvation. I did it and I did it and I did it so I finally got to the point I said I can't do this. I just walked away from it. I didn't quit believing, I always believed. Never quit believing in God, never quit believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God but I just didn't understand it.

I decided, I'm going to take my Bible, I'm going to sit down and read it. I'm going to take my opinion and other people's opinions who I respect, people that I know speak the truth that I can read about and I'm going to define my salvation. It all goes back to Romans ten. You confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Now we don't need to start adding stuff onto that. We don't need to preface it with something or put something on the end of it or on either side of it. It's a stand-alone phrase. To me, the hardest thing about salvation is the simplicity of it. We can't earn it. We can't deserve it. We can't get it. We don't have to go through a certain situation to be with a certain person or in a certain place or have a certain set of circumstances to receive it. It's just that simplicity that we try to -- we constantly try to expand on and we try to make more out of it than what it is and it all comes

down to you believe it, you believe it. You believe that God could love us so much. That's the wonder to me. That God could love us that much that he would send his son. I know how I love my son. I mean my love cannot even approach God's love; to think that he sent his son to die for us -- his only son to die for us.

**James:** You just explained theologically more important truth than a lot of preachers have in years. A lot of times they can preach you right into total confusion. That's what he's talking about. And Christians, sometimes -- when Robert Duvall came and asked me to help him with filming *The Apostle* he said, "I want to kind of have fun with Christians." He said, "You know they're kind of funny." He said, "What they do is funny. We're going to have some fun." And he did.

But he made that great close talking about the love of God and talking about how much God loves us, just what you said Charlie, that he gave his only son, something we couldn't do. You just said it, "I couldn't give my son."

And he said -- in the movie he said, "I couldn't take this little baby and offer this baby and put nails in his hands. I don't love you that much. But God does. God does! He gave his son for you."

Now I really hope all of you will realize that this guy that's a talented musician that taught himself and has a gratitude for what God's allowed him to experience, and then found out there wasn't a thing he could do to lose it or get it, Jesus paid it all, all to him we owe.

Charlie's book is phenomenal. These chapters, you could actually skip all over the place from chapter to chapter and have fun but then you would want to come back and read the ones you skipped because they're just as fun and they're going to be inspirational. I really pray you get the book. I hope you pray for Charlie. I pray he gets another 30 or 40 years. I'll have him back in another 20 or 30.

**Charlie:** We have another date for ten years from now.

**James:** We already have a date set for ten years from now.

Here's the deal. We're here on *LIFE Today* because we love you. Betty and I have never looked for something to do. I have traveled to the ends of the earth and I mean we have gone into places angels fear to tread. We've marched into hell for a heavenly cause. So we don't look for something to do.

You say, "Why are you here? Why are you coming into our home?"



Because God loves you and he wants to love through you. Charlie, when you saw what we were doing and years ago you said, "I want to help them do it." That's what viewers do. That's what I need right now. Every single one of you -- every one of you who are watching, I want you to help us totally change someone's life.

Now remember this. We're coming to the end of the year and this is a time when people make year-end gifts. This is an important time. I'm just asking you right now, you ask God what he wants you to do. Would you do that? But watch closely and prayerfully.

### **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:** I'm really praying that we'll see some tremendous, what we might call year-end gifts. This is an important time. If you can help us with the upgrade of the food factory, do it. Make the gift God puts on your heart.

We are sending you Sheila's book, the beautiful cup, send the beautiful bronze if you'll really step up and help us with the food factory upgrade. But if you say, "James, I know I can get it in the bookstores. I know I can go online and get it but if I help you help the children, would you

send us Charlie's book?" You bet. You will love reading every one of those chapters, the short ones, the long ones. If you didn't do anything but go through and read the titles of the chapters you'd get blessed because the titles themselves are inspiring. That's why he put them on there. They moved him. He has a way with words. He is not only a gifted musician, he is a gifted communicator. Now come to find out, he is a gifted writer.

Would you join us saying thanks to Charlie Daniels for being with us? Charlie, thanks for your help. We've got that ten-year date now! And you can come back sooner too. You don't have to wait.

Thank all of you for watching *LIFE Today*. Thanks for helping us!