

3/5/18
Week 10: WFL
James and Betty Robison
Jamie Ivey

[In the Studio]

James: Wow! You all are wonderful. Thank you. We welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I thrilled to have you. We have a guest by the name of Jamie Ivey. I want you to listen to this. It is quite a colorful book: *If You Only Knew My Unlikely, Unavoidable Story of Becoming Free*.

I want you to welcome our guest and let's hear her story. Jamie Ivey, welcome her to *LIFE Today*. Jamie, good to see you.

Jamie: Thank you guys so much!

James: I want you to just take off on this title because I think you were really laying out something more than just a title. You are sort of setting the stage.

Jamie: *If You Only Knew* is what I felt for so many years of my life. I grew up in a Christian home, great family, great parents, was at church every single time the doors were open; Sunday night, Sunday morning, Wednesdays night, you know every time they were there. I knew a lot about God and I would have said that I was a follower of Jesus but my life did not reflect that at all once I got into high school and college. So I made a lot, a lot of bad choices. Really didn't start walking with Jesus until I was about 21.

So then fast-forward a couple of years and I marry a pastor. So for a lot of years in ministry, I thought if these people knew where I'd been, if these people knew my story, what would they think about me? Would they let me do ministry? Would they think I shouldn't be married to my husband? So I carried that around for a long time.

I feel like a lot of women -- I speak to women mostly, but I'm sure men do as well but a lot of women struggle with secrets and shame and sin they've never told anybody about because they're so afraid of what people will think about them. So that's where the title came from is I lived that life for years and years and years.

James: Why do you think in the church atmosphere you grew up in, why did you go on that

journey, just so far away from what you say you were actually pretending to believe that you went away from, what was going on?

Jamie: I don't think I had ever really believed that God was enough for me. I feel like I sought approval from relationships, from guys, and I don't think I understood what God had for me or what he meant to me or that he loved me or that I could even have a fulfilled life with him. I thought the Christian kids were kind of not cool and boring. Why would I want to be a goodie two shoes when I could have all this fun over here? But on the inside I was just not happy; obviously I needed Jesus.

So it wasn't until I hit rock bottom and then I realized, I think there is something more that I have been not believing about God. I actually went to a Passion Conference in 1999 and God changed my life through a woman on stage. I had no idea who she was. Her name was Beth Moore. [Laughter] And I just knew that this woman was up there, I had never heard of her before, and God spoke through her and the Holy Spirit moved in me and it was the first time I said, "I'm actually going to believe you. I'm going to follow you." And my life changed.

James: So when you say you hit rock bottom, what was going on when you were at that point to make you say, "Rock bottom"?

Jamie: When I was a sophomore in college I ended up getting pregnant. That was really rock bottom for me. I decided I was going to keep the baby and I was going to marry this guy and then a couple months in I had a miscarriage. That actually was rock bottom for me because that's where... now I didn't even know what was up or what was down because although I didn't want to be pregnant, I didn't want to be a teenaged mom, you fall in love with the baby. Then all of the sudden here I am in a hospital and they've told me, "You've lost your baby." I felt as though I'm now at rock bottom. I don't know even what to do.

So I moved back home with my parents and they were so gracious and so wonderful not to force anything down but I started going to church with them again and it was a couple years later.

James: They knew you had lost the baby. So they knew that you had missed the mark very widely.

Jamie: Yeah, but hardly anyone knew.

James: But they did.

Jamie: They did. Yes.

James: And you didn't feel that they were pushing you down or out. You felt like their love was reaching out.

Jamie: Totally.

James: Did the way they manifest that love shock you a little bit that it seemed to be so real?

Jamie: It didn't surprise me because I have great parents. But I did feel as though I didn't deserve them to keep giving me more love and more love because I had really let them down. We kept this kind of a secret a little bit. Not because we were trying to push anything under the rug because I think they just wanted the best for me and they didn't want that to be my story.

So then I struggled a lot with shame and feeling unworthy. Then I marry a pastor who has never even kissed a girl. I felt like oh, I bet you wished you got a different one. And he didn't wish that.

Betty: So did he know everything before you got married?

Jamie: He did. On our very first date I looked at him and I said, "I have some things I need to tell you that I think you're not going to want to date me anymore."

He said, "You take your time. I'm here."

And six months later, I shared with him everything. I cried and he cried and he looked at me and he said, "You have nothing to be ashamed of; that's not even the girl that I know."

So he just set the precedent for me, my healing through that.

James: He showed you in your opinion the very love of God.

Jamie: It was a very tangible feeling of how God loves us and how God looks at us. Of course, my husband is not perfect and he is not God by any means but he did. He didn't think different of me. Here we are married 17 years later, four kids. He stuck around. Yeah!

James: Do you think a lot of people spend far too much or maybe their entire life never experiencing somebody love them like that?

Jamie: Totally. For me, I was worried. Here I am in ministry now. I'm a pastor's wife. I've spent years and years afraid to say this out loud because I thought they wouldn't love me. I put that on people a lot. I don't think that everyone I thought that was really going to be that way to me but I didn't believe --

Betty: You put it on yourself.

Jamie: I put it on myself! I remember the first time I shared my story with a friend and I just laid everything out on the table and she loved me. She didn't think anything less of me and she still doesn't today because she could see that Jesus was evident in my life when I sometimes had a hard time believing it, really.

James: Had she had a similar story in any way?

Jamie: No. No!

James: That makes it even really that much more amazing because Jesus said those who have been much forgiven will have that gratitude and that aura of love. But you wonder sometimes about others. But when you see it, it is beautiful. I feel like Betty is capable of just indescribable, unconditional love and she never went through all the stuff.

Betty: No. Basically I had the good little church girl life. And like you, I put expectations on myself and thought, well, this is the way I'm supposed to act. I'm supposed to be this good girl and if I do good enough then God's going to love me and accept me.

Everybody thought I had it altogether and inside I was dying because I didn't have that personal relationship with him until I was able to confess God, I know nothing without you. And for the first time I was able to say, Jesus, wipe away my sins. Even from that goodie two shoes personality.

Jamie: Which I think is so wonderful because I think that when we all realize whether you've made the grand mistakes that I have or you've lived a pretty decent life without making all the big failures that we've described...

Betty: You can still live in that kind of torment.

Jamie: Yes! Because we're all so in need of Jesus. Like we've all failed. Even on my best day I'm not good enough without Jesus. My thing I want women to be is I want us to be that for each other. I want people to be able to sit across from me and open up and share and for me to say, "Okay, I'm going to point you to Jesus. We're going to look at his word. He forgives you. You are clean. You do not have to live in shame." That's what I want women to live in. So that's a lot of what I talk about in the end of the book.

James: Well, you talk in the book about something I think you referred to, if I'm not mistaken,

as "sin shock." What do you mean by that?

Jamie: Sin shock: It is this idea that women are so afraid that I'm going to sit across from someone and I'm going to share a struggle, I'm going to share -- maybe my struggle might be I'm losing my patience with my kids and it's a little too far. It's not the normal losing my patience. I'm getting really angry. A woman might be afraid to share that because they've opened up before and a woman has been like, "Uhhh!" Or they've kind of not handled it well and thought, wow! I never would have thought that from you.

I want us to know that we're all capable of sin -- all of us. And so it's really hard when someone opens up that you're so shocked by their sin. I think Jesus in the scripture we read about him -- obviously, he hates sin. He died for sin. It cost him a lot -- our sin did. But when I see him interact with people I never get the feeling that he looks at the people he interacted with and was disgusted by them. He was there for them. He offered them living water. He offered them truth. That's what I want -- I want to be that for each other. So I don't like sin shock. I want us to point people to Jesus and know that we're all sinners. So how can I be shocked at your sin? I'm a sinner too!

James: When the publishers and others talked to you about writing your story, what did you find that they found interesting about it that would make it unique enough to put in a book? Because you know I know the publishers, they'll give you, these are the things that interest. What seemed to get their attention?

Jamie: What I've heard a lot of people who haven't heard my story before is they just see my life now, married to a pastor, host a podcast, gets to travel and speak; and then they read it and they think, wow! I never would have thought that you'd been through something like this. I never would have thought you could understand what it means to fail and get back up and try again and keep pursuing Jesus. So I think there's that aspect of it is that we look at someone like you said in the beginning, we look at them and we think, there's no way they could understand what it means to hurt. People might think that about me but it is just not the truth because I have hurt and I've been through pain, mostly by my own causing and God never left.

So I think there's that aspect that women want to see someone who kind of understands what it feels like to struggle and to go through something and she can still say at the end of the day, Jesus is better and he doesn't look down on me. He keeps loving me over and over and over again.

James: I think many viewers have told us not only through television but as I've spoken really all over the world that they would say that one of the things, James, that's really drawn us to listen is that you were willing to admit your own defeat. And even though you obviously were

blessed by God, you had a gift God had given you that was quite obvious to others and you were reaching a lot of people. And yet you were missing the mark and you were failing and you were actually being beaten down to the point that the joy of the Lord was not there. And when you were willing to open up about it and say, "I experienced defeat" it was indescribable.

Many people said, "We too but nobody talks about it." It was almost like it was opening the floodgates of glory for people to come into the presence of God and His grace and forgiveness and realize that if all of us could just understand this, we will never live up to the requirement the law puts on us, the word of God. Every mouth is stopped and all the world becomes guilty before God. And none of us are going to keep it perfect enough to let's say come into the presence of God who is holy, holy, holy. But Jesus did it. He really not only died and paid for our sins but he lived up to the standard perfectly. He is who God sees. This is so tough for us to understand. He looks at the beauty and the perfection and the finished work of Christ. When it is finished, I paid for you. I covered it. I covered it now and forever.

If we don't acknowledge though that we're missing the mark, we're walking outside the shelter and the shadow of the shepherd and we're vulnerable to as the Old Testament teaches the birds of prey, the beasts of the field, the predators, and we're attacked because we're not in the watch care. So we find ourselves vulnerable and defeated and overcome. But what do we do? We come back into the shelter and the shadow of the one who finished the work, the one who oversees, the one who paid for our sins, the one who covers us when we acknowledge we've missed it, we're right back in the shelter and shadow and we're right in that fellowship and we don't need to be separated from it.

A lot of people seem to think they've earned something toward it. They don't realize it is his work. The sooner we get that the sooner we rest in that grace and in that peace. I feel like you have that kind of countenance of that peace and grace that all the other journeying didn't work but when you came there you found it. And now no matter what people know about your past, the present reality is that you're in Christ, Christ is in you, you're a new person. You've got his joy and his peace, his presence.

Jamie: That's exactly right. I think it is really important, like you said about being vulnerable and people would hear your story. I want people when they hear my story to be pointed to Jesus. I don't want them to say, "Oh I know a lot more about Jamie Ivey now." But I want them to say, "Look at what God has done in her life!" I think that when we as Christians are willing to say, "Here's how I've missed the mark, here's how I've failed and look at what God has still done in my life. Look how God continues to love me." I think that says to a very hurting world that this God is worth it. That he is who he says he is. Because if he can use people who fail and he forgives us and he gives us Jesus' righteousness because of his death, then it is a god worth trusting.

So for me, I'd rather them to say, "Wow! When I see Jamie talk about her failures and her vulnerability, I actually see the goodness of God because he is so present in her life."

So I remember the first time I shared on a blog about my story. I had a woman from my church come up to me. Her husband was a deacon at our church, she had four kids, they had been married for a really long time. She said, "I had an abortion. I've never told my husband." Just her hearing my vulnerability, it gave her the strength and the confidence to be able to go and talk to her husband about it. Of course, he loved her. Oh my gosh! Of course! But she felt so much defeat until she saw someone else do it. And she said, "If you can be vulnerable I can too."

Betty: And that's pretty tough sometimes because you're in a place where you feel like everybody could just start throwing things at you because you feel so ashamed yourself. But through that vulnerability God brings forgiveness and peace and joy.

James: You said you do some kind of a podcast or a blog. Where would we find it?

Jamie: I have a podcast that's called "The Happy Hour with Jamie Ivey" and you can find it anywhere you listen to podcasts, iTunes, whatever your app is. I release a show every Wednesday.

James: One of the things I wish our viewers would get because you've talked about like the surprise for the wife when she went ahead and could open up. I think when we fail we want to know if I'm known will I be loved? This is what I hope we can get across, Jamie, and I want all of you who are watching, I want you to listen to me. Just listen to me real close here for just a moment. If you have missed the mark, especially if you have known God or know the Lord or you're a Christian, you know that when you fail the thought comes, will I be loved if I'm known? I'm not necessarily what everybody thought I was or I really failed. Or somebody finds out I've got a flaw that I struggle with, the question that comes to the person who has known the grace of God and the love of God is this, will I be loved now that I'm known?

Well, let me just say this to you very clearly. God loves you period. The Lord Jesus gave his life so he could embrace you with love. But listen. If you laid all the mess of your life out in front of me, I can tell you that I would look at you and so help me God, I'm not exaggerating, I would say I love you with the love God pours out on us through Christ -- and there's nothing impossible. He will pick you up. He will cleanse you and clothe you and you're loved.

I think it's very important for people to know there's somebody there that's going to love you when you're known. Do you appreciate Jamie being willing to share her story with us? Her book is in the bookstores. You can get it online. We've already mentioned the podcast if you

want to check that out.

I'll just tell you this if you'd like to have the book you say, "Something really lit up in my heart. I'd love to have the book." Well, let me tell you what we do. We do something very, very special every day. We share life every day with you, with viewers all over the world -- around the world but we also find someone with a need and we joyfully with great gratitude to God for the joy of doing it, we meet that need.

Betty, there are few things we will ever do or ever have done that give people any greater joy than giving people that have never had clean water, they have deadly, contaminated, disease-ridden water, it is killing their families, we give them fresh water and we tell them about the water of life. I want you to look. I want you to look at the faces, I want you to look at the countenance and I want you to just say, "God, can I be that child's miracle, that family's miracle? Can I be their answer to prayer?" I think your heart is going to leap because you know you can do it. Watch.

[Mission Video]

Announcer: Children, they are gifts of hope, of dreams. They are the future. It seems this would be a universal reality. But in places like this, all that they are, their very future wavers in uncertainty.

The very substance needed to sustain their lives is the very thing trying to take it, their water filled with bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Whereas many adults might have the immune system to fight off these attacks, young children do not. It's not an issue of awareness. The people in this village know their water is the cause.

Open Captions:

>> Unclean water is killing the people of our village.

>> The children say they are concerned about the dirty water. But they have no choice.

>> Families are dying because of this unclean water. People are disappearing. Many homes are closing.

Announcer: With no choice of clean water, no ability to change the situation, helplessness sets in and begins to drain all hope. But the reality is there is hope, for this isn't a problem without a solution. The power and simplicity of clean water lying beneath their feet changes everything. That water is out of *their* reach but it is not out of yours. For when you join hands with ours you become the solution.

[End of video]

[In the studio]

James: I look deep into the very person you see in those faces and I love to put my hands on their little cheeks and look straight into their eyes and say, "You're loved." And wish they could understand, you're really beautiful, you're an amazing person and I want to give you life.

Betty and I have again in answer to prayer and that's what it's been, we've just written a check to give another well. We started 20 years ago praying, God, please help us be able to give water wells. That was before we started doing it twice a year asking for the help. But God answered our prayer.

And listen to me, the wells amazingly at this time, this has been now for years, they're still \$4800 each. That's the average cost; that's what it breaks out to. If you can do that -- here's the thing, I know if you can do it, you will and I want to thank you. I know many of you are praying God, I want to be able to do it. I believe God is going to hear your prayer.

But please listen to me now. Most of the resources that give the wells in the 400 areas that the missionaries have said desperately need it here -- desperately need it. Betty and I could join and say, "We just gave all those little people you just saw, we just gave them a well." There are areas where you must say, "I can do that. I can give them a well." But most of the resources come from people who will give \$48.

Do you know how that breaks out? Because a well will average at least 1,000 people having water basically the rest of their life. A \$48 gift gives ten people water the rest of their life. \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life -- clean water! Not contaminated, not disease ridden. There is a level at which you can help.

This is the last week now for this emphasis. Boy, we need a surge. I can tell you right now. Here's what we need. We need every one of you watching to say, "I'll do what God tells me to do." It may be a gift you say, "It is so small." No, it's not! It's not small to that person you touch with love.

So would you right now just call the number on the screen? Or go online, take your bankcard,

use it like a check and make the gift God tells you. Go get it. Would you do that? Go call or go online. If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE* because that's exactly what you're giving, you're giving life. And the missionaries are going to tell them about eternal life in Christ and they're going to love them because you're enabling them to express love.

Would you do it now? Thank you so much. We have some gifts to send you that I promise are going to bless you and bless children in your life, and a beautiful, beautiful painting that you'll treasure. Just help us give life. Would you? Give a well. Do all you can toward it. Thank you for making that gift. Thank you so much!

[Begin video clip]

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

The good news is there is a solution -- Mission: Water for LIFE is one of the most proven and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. You can help end the suffering because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today, you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in over 15 nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people, a gift of \$48 will help provide for ten, \$72 will provide for 15 people and \$144 will help provide fresh, life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift we'll send you *The Riches of Christ*, what true prosperity looks like filled with wisdom, prayers and scripture. James Robison adds insight from what God has shown him about finding contentment in the Father's provision for your life.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the *Children of the World Storybook Bible*. This easy to read Bible features colorful art by children from nearly 50 countries around the world.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request the "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

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

[End of clip]

[In the studio]

James: We've got a lot of children, we've got great-grandchildren now. *Children of the World Storybook Bible*, it's great! I really wish you -- this is a gift book. It's a condensed version of something I taught about true prosperity. Not giving to get but giving to give; the blessing of blessing others. It's just amazing what happens. You're going to like this. And then the beautiful Thomas Kinkade painting, the "Bridge of Faith" you'll like that.

If you want Jamie Ivey's book, *If You Only Knew*, he does and he loves you but this will bless you. If you'd like to have it, say "James, we're helping give some water, could you send me Jamie's book? I know I can get it in the bookstore but can you send it?" Just ask for it.

Join Betty and me and let's say thanks to Jamie. Bless you and your husband, your church, your family. Thank all of you. Tell your friends about the book. Thanks for sharing life.