

5/21/18

Week 21: Spring Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Scotty and Tiffany Smiley

James: I've got to still be grinning. I'm James, this is Betty; welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm laughing because I've been admiring this beautiful blouse.

You know one of our guests, he can't see. He keeps telling Betty how pretty her blouse is.

[Laughter]

Let me say this to you. This is a very special couple. I just happened to catch part of the prayer breakfast, the presidential prayer breakfast because I figured if we ever had a president that needed prayer we've got one that needs prayer. They all need prayer. I've been able to pray not only for him but with him. By the way, this couple enjoyed being around him.

They said, "You know what? It is just makes you have a love for him and pray for him." That's what we ought to do for all our leaders.

But I saw them on the platform and I saw them as they shared. And I don't know how to describe it other than to say it is grace and glory -- the grace and glory of God all over them. Scotty lost his eyes in the war in the Middle East. He is going to tell you about it. But that put a pretty big load of pressure on somebody as you can imagine. His wife, Tiffany is just a beautiful person through and through.

The book they wrote and it is his book, his story but it is their story, *Hope Unseen*: The story of a U.S. Army's first blind active duty officer. It is amazing. He stayed active duty.

I want you to welcome the Smileys. I want you to welcome Scotty and Tiffany to *LIFE Today*. Would you do that?

[Applause]

Well, I'm glad to see you. Now don't say I'm glad to see me.

Scotty: You're very handsome.

James: That's right, buddy! High five.

[Laughter]

Tell us what happened to you. A lot of people say okay, what happened? What happened to you Scotty?

Scotty: I was serving on active duty in the United States army. Just graduated from West Point, the United States military academy, and married my beautiful high school sweetheart Tiffany. And as soon as I got to my unit received orders to deploy to Mosul, Iraq. One hot afternoon on April 6th, 2005, following the rules of engagement, I found myself in front of a suspicious vehicle; gray opal, single man in the driver's seat, head was buzzed, face was buzzed, silver shirt down to his wrists, just looked like an innocent guy.

But given the suspiciousness of the vehicle I knew I had to get him out. And me standing in a striker vehicle, I felt well protected, bullet-proof jacket on, bullet-proof eyeglasses on. Yelled at him to get out of his vehicle. He looked over his left shoulder at me. Raised his hands off the steering wheel and shook his head no. I yelled at him again. He responded in the same manner and then took his foot off the brake. Nothing in between our two vehicles. I raised my m4 rifle up to my shoulder and I fired two rounds in front of his vehicle and then boom -- my world went black.

I later found out, a week later, waking up in Walter Reed Army Medical Center, blind the rest of my life, that that man was a suicide car bomb; had disintegrated his vehicle, killing himself and sending shrapnel through both my eyes, permanently blinding me the rest of my life. That's when my story and trials really began.

James: Okay, how long before you knew exactly what happened, Tiffany?

Tiffany: So Scotty's best friend who was serving with him called me pretty soon after and let me know what had happened. He said, "We loaded him on a Black Hawk and we don't even know if he is going to survive."

You just sit and you pray. What else -- these military families, when someone is injured or killed overseas, you can't get to them. So it's often harder for them back home. So I just began praying for him. I always pictured Jesus just like in the corner of the room with him when I would pray for him.

James: Wow! What a great vision! All right, now then, you do get together. I want you to just

kind of take us through the journey of what happens because you did feel some pressure that became pretty great. How did you experience that?

Scotty: After the injury, was rushed to the hospital. They removed both of my eyes. More surgeries were conducted. And waking up at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, being told I'll never be able to see again really just -- questioned my life, questioned my faith. I was raised as a Christian, believed in God, believed in what was right, what was I supposed to do? But for me, the life that I had chosen, the life that I wanted to live now seemed impossible, seemed something I could never achieve. So I questioned my faith.

One of my best friends came into the room and asked me to say a prayer. I said, "No, I don't know how to pray and I don't think I know God."

Literally, the room just went dead silent. I think my wife, praying for my eyesight, praying that there's just a hope or a chance that I would be able to see, she quickly realized that my faith was now at the forefront of her prayers. If she was now married to a man who no longer believed in God that was far more important than my eyesight. It wasn't just her prayers but it was the grace of God and his forgiveness that really enabled me to see that living life on my own, living life in a deep dark depression, a place that I was at was one of the most difficult places that I had ever been in and I knew ever would be.

I made a choice to ask God back into my heart, to begin to live a life of -- I didn't know what life I was going to live but I knew I was going to live a life of faith and I was going to live a life with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; that I was going to love him and that he was going to walk with me and truly be my guide.

Betty: How long before you were able to actually be with him?

Tiffany: It was about a week. You don't know the extent of the injuries but I remember I was very adamant that I found my way to Walter Reed before they would authorize me. So I got there before he even showed up. That was important to me to be there when he arrived.

That's when I began -- I had this vision for Scotty. I just every day would come in and speak truth and speak life and hope. I would tell him all the things that he could be. And he would say, "You're crazy!" I was like, watch! Watch! Watch God work in this situation.

People would leave his room and they would say, "This is hopeless. This is an awful situation."

One gentleman who Scotty served with was leaving the room and he said, "He was such a good leader."

And without hesitation I said, "He still will be."

And I truly believed that with all my heart. God had given me a vision. God gave me the strength to guide Scotty during that time and to be a prayer warrior and to speak truth and to speak life into him in a time when he was so desolate and so dark. When you're in that space, like Scotty was saying it has a tendency to pull you down. But it was like, if there's a crack of a little bit of light I was feeding it with everything God was giving me.

It gave me the strength to walk into the room when they were asking me to sign his retirement paperwork because I had power of attorney. They said, "Mrs. Smiley, you need to sign this paperwork. He is blind. We need to start his medical retirement."

And I said, "Absolutely not. I'm not signing it." I said, "I had just walked in and told my husband that he will never see again, I'm not going to walk in and tell him I just signed paperwork for him to be done with the very thing that gave him purpose."

So God gave me the strength to do that and to have that vision. I was sharing with someone earlier that it's so beautiful -- I wouldn't trade anything that we've been through. I wouldn't trade it for anything because God has painted this beautiful picture and shown me that his word is true. And that when you believe in the visions and the gifts that he gives you, the miraculous can happen. God didn't have to show me, Scotty did become a teacher, he does speak and he even wrote a book. That's what I was telling him every day in this hopeless situation, when no one else...

Scotty: And I said, "No, no, no."

James: You stayed in the military too.

Tiffany: No one else believed me. Thought I was borderline crazy during this time. But I was just trusting the vision that God was giving me for him during that time. To see it revealed here on earth lightened the burden. We really had to face the fact that our life forever on this earth was completely altered.

Scotty would never see the faces of his sons. I would never see him playing in the park or pushing a stroller. We really had to come to terms with this was the burden for the rest of our life here on earth. So what are we going to do with it? Are we going to believe that God has a bigger vision than what we can see? But to see that portrayed in our life is truly incredible.

James: You're revealing the greater glory of God and as great as you can reveal it. This

woman -- I'm going to tell you something. If we had generals like this, wars would be short. I'm not kidding you. Here's the deal. She is just such a source of inspiration. She is a beautiful person but there's somebody in her that's so much more magnificent than the world can comprehend.

But she is at least giving us a pretty clear glimpse of what he is like; and you can't see her now but you can feel the radiance of the glory of God on her. Am I right about that, Scotty? Well, it's on you too, buddy. It really is. There is a genuineness. I mean this guy ran in the Iron Man competition. What all is involved in that? Tell us what you did. You're blind, you got to swim, you got to ride a bike, tell us just a little bit about it.

Scotty: So again, like you said, I'm married to an amazing woman who lets me have a few extracurricular activities.

[Laughter]

So in the year that it took me to train, six days a week, all year, 52 weeks, I did a 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bicycle ride, and then a 26.2 mile little jog. I think they call it an Iron Man. But I did it with my brother-in-law. It was just a true race of life. One of the most difficult -- at least in my opinion, difficult Iron Man's in Iron Man history, one of the largest did-not-finishes in Iron Man history. A temperature of 107 degrees -- just absolute miserable. Bicycle tires were popping.

But it was that kinship with my brother-in-law, the family friends just motivating us, inspiring us. And there were multiple times I wanted to quit, I wanted to give up. I couldn't see the finish line. I couldn't see my time that I could stop. Again, when I wanted to quit, my brother-in-law was there, my wife was there, my family was there cheering me on just to keep putting one foot in front of the other. It was that inspiration that that last quarter of a mile, it literally felt like I was running on clouds. It was so amazing.

But in the end it is the race of life. It is like as we go through trials, go through struggles, can't see the finish line, can't see an end in sight, can't see how we can get out of this problem or situation, it's having faith, it's having that knowledge that God is with you, that your family, the community is there to support you to give you that hope, to give you that faith just to keep putting one foot in front of the other with hope and with anticipation that your race will be complete.

James: What you call your ministry because you're both in ministry. She's been inspired to start a ministry that -- what do you call it?

Scotty: *Hope Unseen*, the book title that I wrote. And then I do public speaking to corporations, churches. It's amazing to share my story with those who may not know what it is

like to go through struggles or go through trials in which we have been able to go through, to understand that there is a goal, there is a finish line but it is fighting through and having that hope and having that faith that we encourage people to continue to believe in and continue to have a larger strength.

James: Franklin Graham has been a real friend of yours and you said Billy was kind to you before he went to heaven. I was at the funeral. But Billy was kind to me too. Tell us about your ministry, what you're doing right now because I know you're doing things together. I want you to be able to see -- what God put on your heart, I want to know the website, how they can find out where you are going to be speaking, where y'all are going to be sharing.

Tiffany: So life is interesting and how God brings us through different trials to reveal something on the other side is truly incredible. So part of my journey is as a woman I stood in that gap for Scotty as his wife and spoke truth and life into him but something that I never did was I never grieved. So my grief didn't happen until years later when I had to walk through it and Scotty spoke truth and life into my life. It was a difficult time.

I had three little kids. I felt judged on a lot of angles. People didn't really understand, why she is she grieving? Scotty is well again. But God has a way of just driving us to those points so he can raise us back up. I sort of call it my rebirth. But I went through the grieving process that I lost something here too.

The vision that I had for Scotty was also a vision that God has for me, for all of us as women. So I was inspired to start Story by Faith to encourage women to share their stories; to come together, that we need each other. God gave us each other as women, not to judge or drive wedges in-between each other but together we can do great things. So I started Story by Faith which is a one day women's conference, bringing women together from all walks of life to use their God-given talents and stories to make an impact in their communities, their families and beyond. So I've had a couple of events and they are truly awe inspiring. I think I get more out of them than the people who come. But it is an incredible moment in time because women have a powerful voice and a powerful influence and God wants to use us to be a light to this world.

So my next event is in Charlotte, North Carolina on Saturday, June 23rd. So I'm looking forward to meeting all the women there and continuing to share the light and the hope we all have to make a difference.

James: Website if they want to know events but also if they want to communicate and say, "Would you come and do a one day event in our area?" What website?

Tiffany: TiffanySmiley.com.

James: And now then what all you do together, you're talking about the *Hope Unseen*. Is that a separate website?

Tiffany: Yes.

James: So if they wanted to you to come as a couple because you do speak to corporations, you speak in various functions but that would be where they would go to communicate with you, both expressions, let's say, of how much you've blessed them and also appreciation but also to find out where you're going to be or how they might get you to come and be in their area.

Scotty: Or *HopeUnseen.com*.

James: That's great. The book is in the bookstores. You can get it online. I'll just tell you this today. We are going to help feed hungry children and save their lives and show them that they can make a life and a future. We have gifts to help you and we always offer them. We don't give gifts to get gifts. We give gifts to give gifts because we love you. You're giving to give life. Well, if you'd like to have the book though and you just help us feed some children, we'll be glad to send it to you.

If you had a message that you wanted all couples, all people, let's say all Christians because I feel like if we dressed up in the glory that's on you, I think the church would look more like the Lord and I think Jesus would be lifted up. What would you say to the church today that your desire is for the Christian family? What do you pray for them? What do you hope for them and long for them to either see, realize or become?

Tiffany: I long for there to be love. That we come together... like Scotty and I talk a lot about just Jesus' journey and how incredible it was. That we would be willing to listen to what God is telling us today; that we could pick up and pack up and go where he says and do what he says, to listen to him with love and listen to each other with compassion. That would be my message.

James: It's love that never fails. Even with your challenges, if there hadn't been real love here, to where the love of God actually began to be expressed through the love that was there, it would have been tough for you and you've said that. What do you want people to hear?

Scotty: As God tells us to be like Christ, that God loved the world that he sent his only begotten son, Jesus Christ to forgive us of our sins and to clean us from all unrighteousness is to do that, is to love each other, to accept each other and to be an example to those who don't know him. God came for the lost, not for the found. And just to be an example to the men and women that don't know God; and to know and to share that God has faith and that there is hope. And

through work and through that spirit God will continue to use all of us to make this world an amazing and loving place.

James: You know what I want to say in your behalf? First of all, to God be the glory for the glory and grace that's on you. Would you say thanks to Tiffany and to Scotty? And to the Lord.

Betty, the way you get love flowing is share it. You're smiling because you know we have seen heartbreaking things that only love can heal. Here's what I want you to watch. Watch for an opportunity right now to release the love of God that's in you, waiting to be freely released and it never fails. Watch.

On the mission field

Open Captions:

>> We're asking this lady here if she can talk about... She lost, I think she had three children, four children. Was there a sickness or was it hunger?

>> Yes, it was hunger.

>> I had four children who died. I took them to the hospital, but they couldn't help. They died because of hunger.

>> I lost three children. They died from hunger and a lack of medicine.

Sheila: I know when I've seen pictures of malnourished children -- severely malnourished children before, I thought it is too late, there is nothing I can do. But what I discovered while I was here is that with the first bowl of food you reverse the process. The minute nutrition begins to enter the body of a child it is as if death turns a corner and life marches in.

It is amazing what every single one of us can do! So you might look at these pictures and think like I did, this is overwhelming. It might seem that way but that's just a lie of the enemy. This is fixable. We can do this. We can turn from death to life in a moment.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Those little stick figures that you saw almost look like they would be too frail to pick up. You wonder if they're just going to topple over. You know what Jesus would do? He would pick them up. He would love them.

You say, "He can miraculously restore them too, couldn't he?"

Yeah. But you know what he said? He said when you see the least of these, the overlooked, the too often forgotten, the hungry, the naked, the suffering, and you touch them with love and you pick them up with love, that's what picks them up -- that's how Jesus picks them up today. The missionaries are there and they found them and they found the need.

And by the way, although that's not part of the feeding program, it is part of what the money raised for the feeding program does, it establishes those malnutrition clinics. But we want to stop it before they get to the place that now we know unless something happens right now they will be dead in a matter of hours or days. So in the feeding centers where 400,000 children are, that's where we feed them because that's where they're headed. And unless the feeding is initiated and continued that's where they end up -- and then in those graves that we've seen too often. So we can turn it around. How do we turn it around?

Betty: With love first of all -- a love and a caring in our hearts. You know you hear the hearts of those mothers. They would do anything to help their babies. Well, they have done everything that's available to them. There's nothing left. There is no source for them to go to, James for the food to feed their babies. They know the food could save their lives but we need to help them. We need to give them hope. Those mothers are begging for help for their children just as we would do if our children were hungry and we had nothing to give them. So please join with us. Let's feed these precious little ones that need a chance at life that their mothers love so much.

James: We have the hope. We have the answer to that hope. In many ways we're the hope -- love is the hope. It is what never fails.

Here's what I want to ask you to do because this is no exaggeration. For \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five or ten children for the next several months. Yes, we can. Is there any way you can feed -- would there be any way you could feed ten children? You say, "What is that? How much?" \$100. You can spend that with your family on a nice meal. Could you give \$50 or \$30 and feed three or five? Whatever you can do, you're giving life.

Remember this. There are some of you that are blessed in such a way that you can say, "James, I can give more." \$1,000 will feed a hundred kids -- a hundred of them!

Would you right now go online or dial that number that's a prayer line for broken hearts and heavy hearts, always to call, it's paid for by love. But would you right now dial the number or go online and take your bankcard, make the gift God puts on your heart? Please do it. You're the miracle waiting to happen. This is what love does.

Please do it now. Go get the bankcard, make the gift. If you want to write a check just make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. We need to know that. Thank you so much for doing it. We'll bless you with some gifts that will be a tremendous blessing to you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In impoverished and drought-stricken areas of Africa children are suffering. The need is great and without food they face severe malnutrition -- even death.

With your support LIFE's Mission Feeding outreach can save lives by feeding and caring for children in the hardest hit areas of Angola, Mozambique, and South Sudan. With previous reserves gone and Mission Feeding helping in areas with severe crop failure we urgently need to replenish our food supplies to reach 400,000 children who are counting on us.

Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. And with your gift of any amount, we'll send you *Proverbs Power: Successful Communication*. This powerful CD series, along with study guide featuring Steven K. Scott unveils the secrets to incredible wisdom found only in the book of Proverbs. This series will give you the tools to transform your relationships in life.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the complete *Proverbs Power* library featuring five power-packed sessions that include: The Power of Vision, Breaking through Mediocrity, and much more.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request the "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I want to just say thank you so much for your help. You're going to be blessed by *Proverbs Power*, that's wisdom.

This couple is a blessing. They've got the glory of God all over them. This is a tremendous book, tremendous story. You help us give those kids some food and take care of them and you'd like to have this book, just ask for it. We'll send it to you.

Would you all join me and Betty saying thanks to Tiffany and to Scotty? What a blessing you are. Thanks for coming all the way here to be with us.

Tiffany: It's an honor! It was fun.

James: Thank all of you for being with us. Thank you for watching *LIFE Today*. Thanks for sharing. Thank you.