

7/12/18
Week 28: WFL
James and Betty Robison
Jack Deere

James: Thank you. All of you, thank you so much and welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison, and my wife Betty, are thrilled to have you as guests watching. Thank you for doing that. But we have a friend, Jack Deere and I'm looking at this, this is a beautiful book; the story within, you'd have to say it is beauty from ashes. *Even in Our Darkness*: A story of beauty in a broken life.

Would you welcome Jack Deere to *LIFE Today*? Glad to see you, buddy. Do many people call you Dr. Deere now? Is it Dr. Deere or is it just Jack?

Jack: I just go by Jack, I always have. My students could call me by my first name.

James: Well, that's cool; isn't it? I want you to cover some ground here because God knows you've been through a lot. I want you to just take off because you're trying to tell us something about what can take place even in our dark moments or in our challenges, which we've had. I'd really like for you to share with our viewers basically, what you hope they're going to hear and see and get because I'm convinced they'll get it when they read. But what do you want us to get from this?

Jack: Well, I wrote a version of the Christian life of becoming a Christian and then becoming a friend of the Lord Jesus. It is an unsanitized version. Nobody starts out as a friend but that's the destination, to be a friend of his.

I come out of a traumatic family, a family that didn't go to church. Mom and dad were at war from the time I was about six. We were disciplined harshly. There were actually beatings. My dad ended the war when I was 12 years old. I had two younger brothers and a baby sister and he committed suicide; and he left a 34-year old widow with a 10th grade education and a baggage of four kids. There wasn't a good man around that was going to take a woman like that. So we saw this parade of men through our home. Saw things we should never see.

And all of us, my brothers and I just sort of went south. I did not even cry at my dad's funeral because my heart had shut down before I lost my dad. It would take me years and years to figure

that out and come to grips with that.

James: Because of the way he treated you and the family?

Jack: Because of mom's beatings and my father is absentee; he was a hero but from the time I was six or seven he pretty much vanished from our life. So the only way that childhood heart, that kid could have some kind of sense of stability is that if his heart shuts down and he doesn't feel so much.

I would have not made it until I was 21 except a friend, when I was 17 years old, told me that Jesus Christ died on the cross for me. It was December 18th, 1965. It was the first time I heard Jesus Christ died on the cross for me. You say, "How do you grow up in Texas and not get that message?" Well, that was '65 so no *LIFE Outreach International* on TV. You either had to go to church or you had to have a Christian friend. I didn't go to church and I had no Christian friends.

This one guy prayed for me for 18 months after he became a Christian. He said, "Jesus Christ died on the cross for you." He said, "If you'll trust him to forgive you and give you a new life he will come into your heart and never leave again."

I said, "That can't be true." When you're 17 years old and everyone you've ever loved has left you, to hear that the greatest person in the universe will never leave. I said, "It can't be true."

My friend, his name was Bruce, he said, "Oh yeah. It's true." He was just so quiet and calm and assured. I said, "How do you know?"

He said, "Jesus said so and Jesus can't lie." Then he quoted John 10:28, "I give my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish and no one can snatch them out of my hand."

It was the first verse of scripture I ever heard. I was instantly born again. I didn't have that vocabulary because I hadn't been to church; confession, sanctification, justification, new birth, none of that stuff was in my vocabulary. But in my 17-year old heart I said, "God, I'm coming over to your side now."

Betty: You knew something had definitely transpired.

Jack: Yeah. I went to a Southern Baptist church but then three months later I met a Young Life leader who was like my father, my big brother, and my best friend all rolled into one.

The question I love to ask people is the only person who never needed any help chose 12 helpers.

Why did he do it? For the pleasure it gave him to love these 12 guys and to teach them to love what he loved so that they could count -- their life could count for all eternity. And that's what my Young Life leader did for me. Scott Manley loved me when I was useless to him, we didn't have Young Life club at my high school, and he taught me to love the things he loved. He loved memorizing scripture, he loved reading scripture, and he loved C.S. Lewis.

And I could not distinguish myself academically but when he put C.S. Lewis into my hands I became a devotee. I read every Christian book. So at 17, I don't know a single verse of scripture. At 27 I'm a professor of Old Testament exegesis in Semitic languages at Dallas Theological Seminary.

James: It's totally a miracle.

Jack: Yeah, and I never got that. When it was all happening, it was just going by so fast until I started writing the book and I'd think, I don't know another transformation like that. I look back at my Young Life leader and he laid a foundation in my life that I've been building off of to this very day.

James: But you saw a lot of things that were, most people consider darkness since then too even in your Christian walk.

Jack: Yeah, from the time I was 17 to 52, everything I touched turned to gold. I mean I leave Dallas seminary but I become John Wimber's right hand man. I'm standing next to him when he prays for blind eyes and they open. I see all kinds of stuff. Go all around the world with him; end up writing some books that become international bestsellers. So from 17 to 52 it was kind of life on cruise control. And on December 27th, 2000, my second born son who was the life of every party he was ever in, 22 years old, he mixed five things you can't mix, drugs and medications and he killed himself in our home in Montana. It was a paradise for us until the morning I found his body.

We gathered around him, his older brother and sister, Lisa and I, and we laid hands on him and we said, "We're going to pray for him until God gives him back or until the policemen come and make us leave. Thirty minutes later the policemen came and we went into a cave. I thought Lisa was going to lose her mind. I question whether I had a purpose or not anymore. My purpose had been to go to church and tell people about God wanting to be their friend, loving them and how he does miracles. And here, the son prayed for more than any other person in the world, I lose him in that way. So we started down a really dark path.

But one of the most amazing things about God, we all know he is utterly brilliant and he is creative in the way he communicates but some of the things he did for us in those darkest

moments were absolutely amazing. The first thing he did, was we had all these wonderful friends. We came back here, my birthplace, Fort Worth, collapsed with our friends here and they just circled around us. They were amazing. They listened to us. They cried with us. They didn't try to get God off the hook. They washed our clothes. It was like you've got this place to stay forever and ever. You don't ever have to do a thing the rest of your life.

So two weeks being surrounded by our friends my secretary comes in and she brings a sack of mail and it's 38 sympathy cards -- I know what it is, 38 sympathy cards so I start opening them up. Ten minutes before -- 30 minutes before she brought that sack of mail, the funeral bill arrived and the funeral home wanted immediate payment. It was \$10,064.69. Then she comes with that sack of mail, 38 sympathy cards and 22 checks fall out of those cards. One check for every year of my son's life. I totaled up the checks, they were \$10,065. I was shaking. I made a lot of money in the .com area, ended up losing it all but this time I still had a lot left in the bank. So I did not need God to pay for my son's funeral.

I sat at that chair just inwardly trembling and I didn't say thank you because I want to know why? What are you saying to me? By this time, I've written a book on hearing God's voice. I know he is saying something to me so I just say, "Lord, what are you saying to me?" And these three sentences formed just as firm in my mind. He said, "I paid for his death, I paid for his life, and I'll pay for everything you'll need the rest of your life." I started crying. My heart was beating so fast. It was like, he didn't take away the pain. He just came down and sat beside me and said, "I'm going to walk through this with you."

And I'm not kidding, you guys, every -- just periodically he would break through that darkness with those kind of things that would just pick us up and give us the encouragement to go on. And that became sort of a regular feature, kind of a new dimension of life for me where I was having these revelatory moments where I was actually feeling his affection in all my brokenness and when I was pretty much useless to him.

James: What do you want when you tell this -- see, I know you and I know the darkness that has come at you, and you touched on some of it and all the way even back to your childhood. I experienced plenty of that. And of course, Betty and I lost a daughter right after Christmas. I know that you want people to get something very, very definite. And since you and I have talked, I want you to tell our viewers what it is you want; and you're such a gifted writer, and your journey is so real and you're so approachable and touchable, and you care so deeply, what do you want them to get when they go through this story, this incredible journey?

Jack: Often, when people talk about the book they talk about the suffering but for me the book is not about suffering. I spent the first part of my life angry at myself for not producing enough. I could have always done more, always done better. And I sort of never really liked myself. I came

to a point where I stopped trying to find my self-worth in my performance and started asking God to let me feel his affection and make me one of your best friends like John was one of the best friends, Mary was one of the best friends of the Lord Jesus. And when I started praying like that I started feeling more and more kind of these revelatory moments of his affection and it was like transformative in my life. My anger started diminishing. I always wanted to love God but I defined it in terms of obedience and I didn't understand that I can't really love God like I want to until I feel his love for me.

So I was the Young Life leader for 11 years and students would always come up to me and they would say this sentence, they would go, "I know my dad loves me." Their eyes would look down at the ground, their voice would fall and I would think, I wanted to ask, if he really loves you, why are you so sad when you say that sentence? I think I went through a lot of my life like that. I know my Father loves me but it was more like something I'm telling myself, a sermon I'm preaching to myself, not something I'm feeling from him until I began to ask for it. And to me, feeling the affection of Jesus is really the key to loving Jesus, loving the Father and it is the key to life.

Betty: I think that I understand what you're talking about. I feel like I felt that in the loss of our daughter. The real affection and preciousness and the closeness and that friendship with God that I'd never felt before. I don't think it has to always come from a tragedy. I think if that is the desire of our heart God wants that kind of relationship with all of us.

Jack: People ask me all the time, they go, "Jack, what do you do about the dark days?"

I go, "The dark days are not my problem." When you've been through the loss we've been through there is only one place to go; right? What are you going to do? Try to make more money? Are you going to pick up an addiction someplace? There is only one place to go. It's the good days that are my problem. It's when everything is going great and I got that independent feeling and all that. That's been my problem all my life, it's been the good days not the bad days.

James: How do you get that affection that you long for, to feel it from him, Jack? What do you say to people that say, "Okay, I want that relationship." Because I'm experiencing what you're talking about. I'm the guy that didn't have the father either. Never heard I love you, never one compliment but I tell you, Jack, I feel God loves me so much. He thinks I'm a hoot. He thinks I'm cool. He likes me. You know what I'm saying? I'm just telling you, he just likes me. He loves me. I want to have that close walk with Jesus and the Father all the time. Is that what you're trying to inspire people to know?

Jack: It takes God to love God -- it takes God to love God. So I have kind of three go to prayers I pray every day: Father, grant me a work of the Holy Spirit to love the son of God like

you love him. That's a paraphrase of John 17:26.

And then John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants but friends." So I say, "Lord, I want to be one of your best friends like John. Will you grant me that anointing?"

And then the one, the newest is the Psalm 27:4, "One thing I ask of the Lord" -- the greatest prayer among all the saints, prayers that were prayed 3,000 years ago, two billion people are still praying them and singing them today. Nobody else has that track record. He boils all of his prayers down to a single verse, Psalm 27:4, "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." So every day I'm saying, "Father, will you show me your beauty today?"

Every time I see beauty in one of my friends, my love for my friend goes. And one of the chief ways he reveals his beauty is by revealing his affection for us in our broken states, just like we are right now. And I'm at peace with the fact my performance is always going to be subpar. I'm a love person and that makes up for a whole lot.

James: Boy! Have you enjoyed what Jack has just shared? Do you get it? Do you appreciate the download? Boy, I'm telling you, he is a gifted writer. The journey he's been on, I think he just unfolds in a way that I think you're going to be captivated as you read. But I think you will be moved by God and by God's spirit into a relationship that's more intimate and more meaningful perhaps than anything you ever imagined. I know Betty and I pray that for everyone who watches *LIFE Today*.

Father, I pray for every person right now who really feels like they're overlooked or left out. And would you please show them just what a treasure they are to you and how precious; and that they can become your friend and know that you love them in a very personal way, in a very intimate way. God, please grant them the reality of that in experience in their life; in Jesus' name.

I would love for you to read the book. I know what you've heard has already blessed you. And just watching Jack walk through many dark moments like he shared, touched on a couple of them here, but many more here, to just show you how God does in fact walk us through it -- and he really does. He wants to walk through it as your best friend and it's great to be his friend.

Jack, Betty and I have found such joy, along with all of our viewers, in doing simple things like giving a cup of water in Jesus' name and knowing that when we see the overlooked or the least of these and we touch them, Jesus says, "You're touching me. You're loving me, you're blessing me, and you're doing it for me." Wouldn't you like to do that? Wouldn't you like to bless the one who blesses all of us with such love and grace?

Well, I want you to look and I want you to listen. I want you to listen very closely to a man and this is what you need to know, this is our mission's director, this is Ralph Done. And here he is overseas just a very few days after he's buried his precious wife, the mother of their children. I want you to listen to his heart as he talks about others and how love makes all the difference in so many ways. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Ralph: We're standing here today in the district of Kravang, Cambodia. The village is Kauzmahuu. These people have never had clean drinking water. They don't know what it is to be able to go outside or go in their house and just have good clean water on a daily basis. So today, all that's going to change.

Whoo! Whoo! Oh my gosh! This is what it's all about right here. This year, James and Betty, you've been drilling wells almost 20 years and this year we're going to hit 6,000 wells in 2018 serving over six million people. The Bible says in Isaiah, "The poor will search for water but find none." Then God says, "But I the Lord will hear them. I will not forsake them. I will make dry land springs of water. I will make the wilderness as pools of water."

James and Betty, I feel like we're in that moment right now, almost like a pool of water for this village. In fact, if you're giving for the first time this year, you're giving water for the very first time to 300 families in this village. We praise God for that. Thank you to all the donors. Thank you to all the partners. James and Betty, again, thank you for your vision. All the mission partners love you and thank you with all their hearts. God bless you.

Open Captions:

>> 60% of infant deaths worldwide are related to waterborne illnesses. Be an answer to a mother's prayer.

End of clip

In the studio

James: God bless you, Ralph, your precious family. Recently we heard our grandson, the son of the daughter, Robin that's in heaven tell his whole church and people all around the world in a beautiful presentation about the challenge after he said good-bye to his mother, mother of three teens, and talked about the grace of God. It was so powerful. I know Robin was looking down smiling. We're saying, "God, thank you."

I see Ralph and what he went through and realize that he's there saying that we can be the answer to that mother's heart cry for her children. And all those people who have seen their children get so sick or they've been so sick, and all of the sudden they can have the life that you saw come in, Water for LIFE. It's all being given because of the water of life that lives in us, Jesus.

Betty, it's been the most amazing thing to watch our donors drill those 6,000 water wells with love one cup at a time, one well at a time. I believe everyone watching is going to do something.

Betty: I trust that you will. My heart was just leaping with joy as I watched those children dancing around in that fresh clean water that they had never had the opportunity to taste before. But there they were with great joy in their heart and expressing themselves as children would do. But what great joy had to be in the heart of every mother that watched their child there. At that moment when she knew that now she would have fresh clean safe water for her babies. Join with us if you will and let's continue to be able to do that, to let the water spring forth of God's love and the example of God's love being sharers just as you are as we share with these precious little ones.

James: I'm believing that every one of you are going to help. You're going to give a cup of water. By the way, we're giving these beautiful coffee cups, one for morning and one for evening, that are absolutely beautiful just to say thank you for giving a cup of water, a well of water. And we're sending the book, *The Miracles of Christ* which we have talked about and many of our guests have shared their stories. It is phenomenal. It is a beautiful gift book. The pictures inside are like the ones on the cover. You're just going to be blessed and you're going to be inspired.

But here's what I'd like you to do. A gift of \$48 to help us drill one of those 400 wells will give ten people water for the rest of their life. Isn't that amazing? And listen to me. There is a level at which everyone can participate. You give a gift of over \$100 and we're going to send those cups, any gift we're going to send the book, if you could give \$1,000 or more or say \$1200, which would be three more people joining you and we've got a well because the wells cost \$4800. Anyone who gives \$1200 or more we're going to send the beautiful Thomas Kinkade canvas painting, the "Bridge of Faith."

So I'm asking you to do what God leads you to do. There is no gift too small. There is a gift at which level you can come in. And if there's any way and a lot of people say, "James, it's one of the great joys of our year to give a well. We look forward to it." Would you give \$4800? If you can, I believe you will.

Go online or dial the number you see. Take your bankcard and use it like a check. But let us

know what God put on your heart. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. Please let us know that. You're going to make a tremendous difference in many lives. You're going to give them life. Thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today a mother living in extreme poverty will do the unthinkable: give her children dirty, diseased-filled water that she knows could kill them. With no other choice, what's a mother to do?

With your help, clean water is on the way. Mission: Water for Life provides a new beginning for thousands of children and their families; a bright future with better health.

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 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 life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift we'll send you *The Miracles of Christ; What Living Beyond Impossible Looks Like*. Filled with scriptures, prayers, and stories of Jesus' miraculous power, James Robison adds insight about how to walk in faith and live beyond the impossible.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the Morning and Evening coffee mug set. Each mug features beautiful artwork and scripture from Psalm 92:2, a wonderful reminder of God's faithfulness each day.

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 beautiful Bridge of Faith framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I just say thank you so much for your participation. We're going to send the book, *The Miracles of Christ*.

By the way, if you say, "James, if we help give water to those precious families and children,

could you send us Jack's book?" You can get it online or in the bookstores and tell your friends about it. But you say, "I just feel like I need the book. If I'll help you reach out to those children, will you send it to me?" Yes, we will. You just ask.

Would you join Betty and me again in saying thanks to Jack Deere? We appreciate you very, very much. Thank all of you. Thank you for watching. Thanks so much for your help.