

7/26/18
Week 30: WFL
James and Betty Robison
Mo Isom

James: Wow! We welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison; Betty and I are just thrilled to share this time with you. Thank you. You're really, really special. I believe with all my heart that you've got to be among the most special people in the world. You watch *LIFE Today*? You know what you always know? You're going to get blessed, there is no question about that, but you're going to get to bless someone. You may get to bless a lot of people and you're going to be blessed doing it. And you enjoy it.

We've got an exciting guest, Mo Isom. She was an All American goalie in soccer and very talented. But the Lord changed her life miraculously. And the boldness and courage with which she tells her story and her journey is remarkable.

The title of the book that's out, and I'm telling you it is going to bless a lot of people, *Sex, Jesus, and the Conversations the Church Forgot*. Wow! Would you welcome Mo Isom to *LIFE Today*? We're glad to see you.

Mo: Good to see you. I'm happy to be here. It is a treat.

James: I want you to just cut to the chase. I want you to tell us your story, your journey because I know you don't want -- no holds barred. You started out with the term "sex."

Mo: The title is just no holds barred.

James: Well, here's the thing. The first time we ever talked about sex on television on our program Betty put a brown paper sack over her head and cut holes in it.

Betty: This little Baptist girl.

[Laughter]

James: Oh well. She can handle it now. We've been married 55 years; she can handle it.

Mo: I was going to say you've got some experience under your belt.

James: Let's hear your story. You were blessed as an All-American in soccer. But the story you want to tell, let's hear it. What happened to you as a girl?

Mo: Christ just encountered my life in a really radical way. Growing up, was this incredible athlete and enjoyed playing soccer and excelled in it but a lot was going on behind closed doors too. I was struggling with identity issues and an eating disorder; lost my dad very unexpectedly to suicide; was in a horrific car accident and just adversity after adversity after adversity. But Christ encountered me in that car accident and transformed my heart completely. My life looked so different moving forward from there and I realized as I was moving and healing that my sexual narrative, the sexual part of my story so paralleled the brokenness, the hurt, these seasons of depression and anxiety and struggle and promiscuity, and then Christ encountered it and it transformed my perspective completely.

So I was someone growing up, I guess the church had a lot to say about "Do this, don't do that." "This is right, this is wrong." We talked a lot about virginity but we never actually really talked about purity. What God cares deeply about, a pure heart. We talked a lot about behavior modification but we never really talked about heart transformation. I heard a lot about sex but I never really heard about why it mattered to be obedient to what God designed.

So it just played out in some broken ways in my youth. At eight years old I came across my first glimpse at pornography. Actually, a playing card, a novelty poker card fell out of the back of my dad's truck and I picked it up and saw it; and just porn just sears something on your soul. It just affected me in a really big way at eight years old and out of my father's belongings.

So I started down a path of struggling with pornography. It almost calls out to you, it almost seeks you. You seek it and you try to find it and I just filled my mind and my heart and my eyes with really broken things. That kind of desensitized me to the point that when temptation really came I started acting these things out and trying them. We live in a culture that says it is fine, it is good. It is our entertainment and it's permissible. Figure it out. Give it a try. I just really started to lose myself in promiscuity. Then after the loss of my dad, that grief triggered even more promiscuity; any sin-sized piece to fill that hole in my heart.

I still am kind of waving this proud banner of virgin because I was supposed to be a virgin as a church girl but was just really wrestling with a lot in the darkness and in a really broken place. Even I struggled with adultery, involved with a married man unknowingly in college. Still waving this banner of virginity, but just really missing it, missing the full understanding of it. Just in a very dark place but God encountered me so incredibly. When he did that, he didn't just change one little element of my life here or there, he completely brought me from death to life.

He opened my eyes to the truth of who he was and the truth of what he called from me for my life.

It was in that place that I encountered the truth of who Jesus really was in light of my sexual sin. It completely shifted my perspective. I came to know the God who used Rahab the prostitute in the lineage of Jesus Christ. I came to know the Jesus who sat with the whore, by all accounts, the Samaritan woman at the well. In the face of all her sexual filth, he didn't run, he stayed and he offered her living water that she would never thirst again. I came to know the Jesus who stood with the adulteress and didn't cast a stone but said, "In response to my great love and mercy, live different. Go and sin no more."

When I encountered that Jesus, it just transformed my heart completely. And all of this shame and all of this guilt and this deep, broken, sexual past, it just transforms my understanding completely of who Jesus was in light of my sexual sin. The mercy and the grace that he extended, and the great compassion that I believe Jesus feels for people struggling with sexual sin because if we're going to be honest here, it is the vast majority of people.

Listen to this and I'm going to talk about pornography specifically, because this is a piercing issue in our culture right now. In 2016, one calendar year, on *one* pornographic website -- and there are hundreds of thousands -- but in one year in one website we as a people consumed 4.6 billion hours of pornography.

James: One website?

Mo: One website -- just one out of the many. That's 524,000 years of pornography; that is 17,000 complete lifetimes of porn consumed in one year on one website. I think we're missing the mark if we assume this is just unsaved males wrestling with this. This statistic is men, porn is affecting women, porn is affecting children, it is affecting the church, it is affecting those outside of the church, and it is universally affecting us. The average age of exposure to pornography is nine years old. I was exposed at eight. Now with hand-held devices these are elementary school kids accessing these things on the school bus. The enemy --

James: And far beyond anything you would have seen when you were eight or when I was a child or that I did see when I was a child.

Mo: My first exposure was like trying to figure out the fuzzy channels; where you would see it on TV and trying to figure out what it was. And now, you click on the wrong hashtag on Twitter and suddenly you're inundated with porn. Sexual sin, the enemy has used it in such a precise way to silence us with shame.

James: I know that very good people are trapped, ministers, leaders are trapped. You were a good little girl when you were trapped. You weren't some evil person but you had some natural -- what do you think makes a woman or a girl, why do you suddenly become interested in this? See I could understand a boy. A normal boy thinks a girl is the prettiest thing God ever made. And the fact is she is; women are beautiful and don't let any woman ever feel like you're not beautiful because you don't look like certain ones that people say that's beautiful. Stop all this nonsense. You're a beautiful person. You're a beautiful individual.

But nevertheless, sex is a powerful attraction and girls are attracted to men. So sex is in itself a very beautiful thing. And the thing is that men who love God see that's good and they're trapped by it. It puts a hook in. It is like a tattoo on your brain. It is a passion that's indescribable for men and they find themselves trapped. They have a love/hate relationship with it. They don't know what to do. And the church, like you said -- what did you say? The church forgot -- we don't talk about it in the right way. If we talk about it, it is the wrong way. We're condemning everybody and making them feel like dirt.

But the point is people are buried. So how do we speak to the woman or to the men? What's your word to us because I know you want people to hear.

Mo: I think the first thing that we have to understand is that sexual sin struggles, sexual temptation, they're not just a male issue, they're an issue of the heart. Women are sexual creatures too. I know that might be a big announcement to the Baptist church but women are sexual creatures too. We have the same temptations and urges, and all of these things. I think what's happened is the world has so stolen the sanctity of this gift, so twisted it, cheapened it, perverted it, robbed it of its glory that it has made sexual conversations such a taboo thing.

Unfortunately, I feel like the body of Christ, and that's who I'm addressing when I say "the church," I'm talking about us, the body of believers, we've almost bought into this taboo stigma and we feel like ugh, it's a big cultural issue. I don't know how to speak into it. I don't know what to say. I'm actually wrestling with some stuff in private and I don't... We've allowed the enemy to confuse us.

If you look at the holy Word of God, there is nothing confusing about the gift of sex. A gift given to us, an act of worship given to us, actually a weapon in marriage against the enemy, a unifying tool that the enemy has allowed to become something so divisive, and really silenced us feeling like it is too taboo to discuss.

So this book isn't a call out of the church, it is a call up. Let's reclaim sex for the glory of God. Let's speak right into this because it is an important conversation to be had and let's understand this isn't just a male thing or just a female thing but this is an issue of the heart.

What you see the Garden of Eden with Eve, she never intentionally chose to be this terrible person and rebel. Very few of us wake one morning in complete purity and think, you know what? I'm going to go sleep with five people today. It's not like suddenly there is this massive shift. What happened with Eve in the garden and what we've seen through the course of history since then is that we've chosen to choose for ourselves what is best for us. Eve saw a little temptation and she chose to choose for herself in spite of God's instruction.

I think that's what happens with us. It is a heart condition. It is a heart condition of making ourselves the god of our own stories, of choosing what we think will fill that void or mend that pain or give us that pleasure we desire, whatever it may be. And kind of compartmentalizing our lives and then the repercussions of sexual sin come crashing in and suddenly we're confused and we're hurt and we're mad at God. But I think it's just indicative that we as a culture are suffering from a heart struggle in understanding the truth of sex.

Betty: What would you say to someone that's been listening to you, your story and your journey, saying, "I'm all those things, I'm just where she is -- but what do I do? Do I go to somebody? How do I get help to get out of this trap?"

Mo: I would say first and foremost, the scripture, "No temptation that has overtaken you is uncommon to man." It is so many of us wrestling with these very same things. So the first truth I would speak over anyone wrestling with that, is you are not alone.

James: And you are not unloved, and you are not unreachable and unhelpable -- or unlovable.

Mo: You're seen, you're known. The God of the universe, he sent his son to die on the cross for you, for the redemption, the freedom from that stranglehold over your life! In fact, he feels great compassion, great pity, great love for those who are entangled in something further and tighter than they ever even realized.

So I would say there's hope and his name is Jesus because Jesus is the one who can transform our hearts completely and can bring us out of that pit.

James: And they don't need to see themselves as wicked, we don't need to make them feel like they're wicked, they're trapped by something that is wicked that the enemy has made, that was great and good. And here's what I think the church has to help people understand, and parents with their children, every sin is without the body but sexual impurity is sin against your own body. People don't realize when we get trapped in sexual impurity, we're actually damaging the very potential that's been put there for the full exhilaration and enjoyment of it. And the more people are exposed to this, the more they desensitize themselves, the more they reach a place that

they cannot get that, which is then why many of them go to drugs or go to extremes trying to get a high. They don't realize they're setting themselves back, taking away the beautiful gift God gave them while they've actually erroneously made an idol out of it or it has captured their heart, captured their eyes, or their mind, and it is held them as a prisoner.

We've got to be willing to speak openly. You're willing to talk openly about defeat. Years ago I talked about how lust had literally damaged me and could have destroyed me totally, it can any of us. We've got to realize that and there's got to be a willingness to talk openly. Do you agree that people need to be willing to say, "I'm struggling with this"? So you have no problem talking about it now because you found this freedom, you found you weren't unloved, you were loved by God. You might have been in a ditch. He was wanting to get you out. He wouldn't want to bury you in it, he's wanting to lift you up out of it. That's the message the church has got to get out and not make people feel like they're wicked because they're trapped by something that the wicked may be promoting and magnifying and marketing, they're just caught. They're the captives that need to be set free.

Mo: Exactly. We're fiercely, fiercely loved by God. Seen, known -- we were the pinnacle of his work, his creation. He delights in us. It is the whole reason he sent Christ to the cross so that we could move in that freedom, in that power. It is liberating when we come to know that truth and it truly does have the power to set us free from this bondage.

I love the transformation that God is so faithful to pulse through people's lives when they humbly come before the Lord and say, "Take it! Take it. Make this burden easy and this yoke light." And he is so faithful to free us of that bondage.

I think there is a neat shift happening right now. I see a world that is deeply hurting and inundated by sexual sin but I also look at scripture that says, "Boast in your weaknesses so you can point to the glory of the cross." Boast in that that's bound you so it makes grace matter. And the more voices that rise up and say, "This was my weakness, this was my struggle, this is what almost took me down but if that cross did not set me free, if I don't know freedom through that, that's what I have to boast in." The more voices that can rise up that way we will see revival in our culture. We won't be able to help but see a shift in response to the goodness and glory of a God who loves us even in the midst of our mess, even in the depth of our filth he says, "My grace, my mercy extends all the deeper."

James: Isn't that all which you're pouring out through this book?

Mo: Yes! It is a book of healing -- hope!

James: And you had no holds barred, you didn't hold back, and you're pouring out the love of

God in any situation, on any person no matter where they are. Like you said you kept certain rules and yet you were violating the very purity and the essence of purity. If we could only learn to really respect one another.

Let me just say to you, ladies, you are -- and I had Betty stand in front of the entire group here tonight and say, "Look at the pretty blouse she bought from one of our wonderful friends that has a dress shop and has supported the ministry for a long, long time, Michelle. And I said, "My wife is beautiful, 55 years married. Nearly four years we dated." We were so pure, we were sweet. We were because this little lady right here, I told her, I said, "Sometimes I may not feel so pure. You need to be real strong." So she was really strong. And you know what? She could block any move I'd make. And sometimes now I'll put a move on her and she will block it and say, "I'm still strong! I'm still strong!"

Betty: It's a habit.

[Laughter]

James: Listen to me. We love you. I want all of you to know you're beautiful and you're loved. Please understand how much God loves you. This precious, precious woman right here has poured out the love of God in total openness. This is a fantastic book. She has a fantastic journey. You're a beautiful witness for Christ. You glow with the glory of God.

Would you say thanks to Mo for being so open and so honest? Isn't she is a beautiful picture? And she can block those kicks.

Listen to me. You are such an awesome audience. Betty and I feel so blessed that we can even be considered your friend and that you would experience *LIFE Today* by sharing *LIFE Today*. We're going to show you something right now that every viewer says, "We don't have any greater joy than doing what you're about to ask us to do." Boy, you talk about something that lasts not only for a lifetime but for eternity, that's what you're going to see. You're going to see love that lasts for eternity when expressed. Watch.

On the mission field

[Ominous music]

[Water splashing]

Ralph: This is heartbreaking! This little guy is telling a story about his baby sister who just

died this year from drinking this water right here. It's just awful. Just listen to him.

Open Captions: I loved my sister very much and always took care of her. She got diarrhea over and over again. She just died. I felt so sad. I cried.

Announcer: Right now these three siblings live with their grandmother who takes care of them the best she can. But every day they still either have to drink the same water that took their sister's life or else die themselves from dehydration.

We know there is a better option. Contaminated water may take lives but clean water saves lives. If you help us drill a clean water well in this village, you will protect children from ever having to drink this water again.

Ralph: I don't want to see that water take one more child away from this family.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I don't believe there is a single person watching us right now, Betty in what we just saw that can think about that little boy talking about his sister. He's got two other little girls, sisters, with him. But he is talking about his baby sister dying and how sad he was. That's a precious little boy thinking about that; it's not something that should even register in a child's mind.

But, Betty, that contaminated water is killing hundreds of them. That was a grave they were kneeling by and our mission overseer, Ralph Done was standing there by a grave. He said, "Let's stop this." And the way we stop it is by drilling a freshwater well in that area.

You saw there at the end the children rejoicing where there was a well drilled. You've helped drill at the end of this year 6,000 water wells! Think about that! That is a lot of love and that's million of lives touched and literally millions saved and led to Christ because we give them Water for LIFE because of the water of life.

Would you right now help us drill the 400 water wells this year? We've got 200 to go. We just need a miracle outpouring of love and I believe we're going to have it. Here's what I'm asking you to do. Go online, take the website there or dial the number that's there as a prayer line, always to help you and pray with you; take your bankcard and just make the best gift God leads you to make.

Here's what I want you to understand. The wells average \$4800 each. Sometimes individuals say, "I'm going to give a well." It becomes a great joy. If you can give a well please do or a portion of a well.

Please know this, the majority of what comes in to drill those wells, people giving \$48 or \$144. Example: \$48 gives ten people water the rest of their life; \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life. So there is a level at which everyone can participate.

We have some gifts to send you, *The Miracles of Christ*, which is exactly what we share when we give a cup of water. Jesus says, "You give a cup of water in my name, you won't lose your reward." We're giving away beautiful coffee mugs, one for the morning, one for the evening with the scriptures there to just really rejoice and praise the Lord morning and evening. Great way to start the day and close the day. We also have the beautiful Thomas Kinkade "Bridge of Faith." If you can give a gift of \$1200 or more toward the \$4800 well, ask for that beautiful framed canvas.

Thank you so much for being sensitive. Thank you for not turning away when you see someone with a broken heart and you see a need that love can meet. Thank you for meeting that need. Would you please right now make the gift God puts on your heart by calling the number or going online? Thank you so much for doing it. You are giving life. That's the greatest gift.

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, thank you from the bottom of our heart for your help and your love -- not just today but all the time. If it is the first time you've ever helped drill a well, it won't be the last, I promise you. I'm sending you *The Miracles of Christ*, the beautiful morning and evening coffee mugs or whatever you like to drink as a warm drink. And here, if you'd like to have Mo's book, and I'm telling you this one is relevant, and she's got the glory and glow of God all over her, and I believe God really gifted her to write this and to share it. If you say, "James, would you send it to me?" It's online, you can get it in the bookstores, but if you say, "If we help give water would you send it to us?" If you want us to, we will. Just ask for it.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Mo again for being with us. Mo, you're a blessing. Thank you! Thank you so much! All of you, thank you for being here. We've got a few of her friends that played soccer with her at L.S.U.! Thank all of you for watching.