

6/12/18
Week 24: Spring Mission Feeding, Last Week
James and Randy Robison
Lee Strobel

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. This gentleman you know, my father, James Robison.

You know what, Dad? Last time we had this guest on you missed it and I told you, Sheila and I were thrilled that we had him. But boy, haven't you just enjoyed getting to know this guy?

James: Just even being with him for a little while. But here's the thing. You and Sheila enjoyed him so much when you found out he was coming back, you said, "Why don't you and mom go away?" Mom had something to do tonight but I said, "I'm coming. I want to be with him."

Why don't we welcome the one who wrote *The Case for Christ*. It's now a movie. It's doing unbelievable -- just phenomenal. Now there is this book. It is amazing! I'm reading a book about *The Case for Miracles* from a Baptist university professor.

[Laughter]

It's incredible! "A journalist investigates evidence for the supernatural" -- Lee Strobel.

Would you welcome Lee back to *LIFE Today*? Lee, good to see you, buddy.

Lee: Great to see you.

James: You understood, I said Baptists really, really believe the Bible. Baptist universities certainly, they uphold the Bible, that's what they're supposed to do. But it's almost as though we believe Jesus did them but we're not sure he keeps doing them. We think it's like he retired from some important stuff. It's never really made a lot of sense to me. As a Baptist, why would he stop? Why would the unchanging Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever stop doing something that is so much a part of the great physician's psyche? It's who he is. So why, to you as a university professor, take off on this? Were you just trying to stir trouble?

[Laughter]

Lee: You know I was an atheist for much of my life and it really was the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus that convinced me that Jesus is who he claimed to be, the unique son of God. That's what brought me to faith is that historical evidence for that miracle.

Well, when I came to faith, I not only believed that, I believed the gospels, I believed the other miracles that Jesus did but I'm a skeptic by nature. My background is in journalism and law. Can you imagine putting those two things together what kind of a jerk -- or a skeptic! A skeptic!

[Laughter]

So I asked myself, is this real? Is God still in the miracle business? Or is there a lot of fraud involved? Is there a lot of misdiagnosis? Or could it be spontaneous remissions? Or could it be the placebo effect where people think they're going to get better so they do feel better?

So I thought, you know what? Even as a Christian sometimes -- I hate to admit this but it is true -- but sometimes we feel like we're deists. In other words, that God is distant, God is disinterested in us, God has kind of checked out. We know the Bible tells us he hasn't and yet sometimes it feels that way. And you wonder, is he still active in our world doing the miraculous? I thought, I just want to devote some time and investigate it as I did as a journalist for the Chicago Tribune to see is there credible evidence? Is there irrefutable evidence that God is still in the miracle business?

James: Today?

Lee: Today. And there is, by the way.

James: By the way, didn't you actually too see some things in religious settings where they talked about healing but it was obvious that there was a lot of manipulation, misrepresentation and even total dishonesty about it? Which would set you back.

Lee: It does. And you wonder therefore are all of these claims of miracles overblown? The truth is, and this is a terrible thing to admit about the church but a lot of churches are embarrassed by the supernatural. They want to be seen as normal by their neighbors. They want to be respectable. So we're not weird. We just believe in Jesus. We're just like you. No! We have the Holy Spirit in our lives; that makes us different. So some churches kind of downplay the miraculous. They don't want to open the door to something that might be "disruptive" to the nice plans that have been set forth.

Randy: Or word might get out; right?

Lee: Yeah! Word might get out. Exactly! So I think that's unfortunate. We impoverish ourselves as Christians when we don't invite the miraculous into our midst.

You know five years ago I was very ill, I almost died. I had a lot of Christians would come and pray for me that I would be healed. But what was interesting because I'm laying there and I'm listening to these prayers. And most of the prayers were like, "Guide the hands of the surgeons."

"Relieve Lee of the pain." Very few came out and said, "God, heal this man! Heal this man!"

James: If they did, they wouldn't want to be heard. Yeah, except maybe by God only.

Lee: Right, because what if I'm not healed then I'm embarrassed about it.

James: It didn't work!

Lee: It didn't work. So we have these mixed emotions about the miraculous.

Randy: So before you go any further because I know you're going to give us some cases that you've talked to. How do you define a miracle?

Lee: It's interesting. I think people mis-define it a lot; they misunderstand it. David Hume, the famous atheist from the 1700s got it wrong. What he said is, "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature." No, it is not. If I were to take this book and drop it, the law of gravity says it will hit the floor. But if I take this book and drop it and you reach in and grab it before it hits the floor, you haven't violated the law of gravity, you haven't overturned the law of gravity, you've merely intervened. So that's what God does.

I think a miracle is an event brought about by the power of God that is a temporary exception to the ordinary course of nature for the purpose of showing his involvement in our world. I think that kind of sums it up. When I see something that is absolutely extraordinary, that goes beyond coincidence for which there is no naturalistic explanation, for which there is a spiritual setting, prayer involved, for instance, and reliable eyewitnesses and medical documentations, the miracle bell goes off in my mind.

Randy: And you've seen some of these.

Lee: I've seen some of them. I talked about it in the book.

James: And documented, you confirmed them, irrefutable evidence.

Lee: I'll give you an example. Barbara, Barbara Snyder is her married name. Barbara Snyder was diagnosed at the Mayo Clinic with Multiple Sclerosis. Over a period of years she deteriorated seriously: Multiple surgeries, multiple hospital stays, now she is dying. She is in hospice at home. She has a short time to live. She is shriveled up like a pretzel. Her fingers are touching her wrists. Her toes are extended. One lung is collapsed, the other lung is half collapsed. She is blind, except she can see gray shapes. She has lost control of her urination and bowels. She has a tube in her throat so she can breathe. She has a tube in her stomach so she can eat.

James: So even as a skeptic this is a serious problem.

Lee: This is serious!

Randy: And she's seen a lot of doctors -- some of the best.

Lee: For decades! As one doctor said she was as hopelessly ill as any human being he has ever seen. So here she is, she is dying. Somebody called in W.M.B.I. the Christian radio station in Chicago and said, "Pray for Barbara. She is on her deathbed." We know that 450 Christians began praying because they wrote letters saying, "We're praying for you, Barbara."

On Pentecost Sunday she is in her bed, two of her friends are there. They're reading her some of these letters that people had written saying they were praying for her. Barbara hears the voice of God coming from the corner of the room saying, "Get up, my child and walk." Which would be like saying to you, "Get up, James and fly" because she hadn't walked in seven years. Her legs had atrophied. She had no muscle tone.

What did she do? She ends up pulling the tube out of her throat, she jumps out of bed. She said to me, "Lee, first thing I know is my feet were flat on the floor. My feet have been flexed. And my hands were normal. Then I realized I'm seeing. My eyesight was back."

Her mother comes running in, falls to her knees and says, "You're calves are back!"

Her muscle tone had returned instantaneously. She was completely and totally and instantaneously healed. That night there was a service at her Wesleyan Church that all they knew was Barbara in a wheelchair, Barbara dying. And the pastor said, "Does anybody have any announcements?" And Barbara started walking down the center aisle and people exploded. They began singing, "I once was blind and now I see. Amazing Grace."

The next day she goes to her doctor. Her doctor said later, when she walked down the corridor, "I thought she had died and this was a ghost."

[Laughter]

He said, "There is no medical explanation for this. This is a miracle!"

So this is credible eyewitnesses who have no reason to dispute this. Medical records going back for years. Two doctors have written about it in books because they were so amazed by it. They're saying it is a miracle. There is no naturalistic explanation. It is not a spontaneous remission because those happen over a period of time and often illness comes back. She's been healed now for over 30 years. She is healthier than I am. Guess who she married? A pastor.

[Laughter]

And they have a little church there in Fredericksburg, Virginia. And she is -- when you ask her...

James: You like to hear this? I just wonder, do you like to hear this?

Lee: Praise God! Praise God! It is just -- he is still in the miracle business!

James: Share some others with us.

Lee: Well, one of my favorites is the guest you had on your show, Duane Miller. I think you've had him on the past. You know Duane? Duane is this guy who lost his voice, his voice was paralyzed because of a virus.

James: He was a singer and a Sunday school teacher.

Lee: Exactly. A preacher. He lost his job because he can't preach anymore. And he went to 63 doctors over three years including a Swiss symposium of experts on the voice who all said, "There is no hope. Your vocal cords are paralyzed. There is zero chance of coming back."

But his Sunday school class at First Baptist Houston said, "Come on and preach."

He said, "I can't preach."

"No, no, no! We'll listen to you because we love you."

So they put a miracle phone on him and he starts preaching from Psalm 103 which talks about

God's power to heal. And as he is preaching for the first time in three years it's like this hand he felt around his throat came off. All of the sudden his voice returns. And as he talked about, sometimes the verse talks about being in a pit. He said, "We've all had pit experiences." And all of the sudden his voice comes back. The interesting thing is it was tape-recorded.

James: Yeah. He came here with it which you've got to understand, he came here shortly after it happened. So he lets us hear it. We're absolutely stunned. This cannot be happening. We're listening to it happen and these people are watching. And then he stood up and sang here with a powerful voice which couldn't be.

Lee: You know what he does now? He's got a radio show -- of all things! A radio show using his voice.

Three things I learned from this book. Number one: God is still in the miracle business. Number two: There are a lot more miracles than we think. And number three: There are a lot better documented miracles than we suppose.

Randy: Interesting point because you commissioned a survey to find out sort of the mood of Americans; was it strictly in the United States?

Lee: Yes.

Randy: And you found out that there was a group of people in our country who believe in miracles at a higher rate than the rest of the country.

Lee: Yes! This is interesting. Among the average population in America, among the adults, 38% say they have had an experience in their life that can only be explained as a miracle of God -- 38%. But among physicians, 55% say they have seen a miracle in their practice.

James: These are the guys, they're trained not to believe.

Lee: Exactly! Exactly! In fact, skeptic magazine did an article and said, "Only the uneducated believe in miracles." Well, you've got a majority of physicians who believe in miracles. Do the math. If we have 38% of Americans saying that they have had a miracle in their life, let's say just for argument, 99% are mistaken. Let's say 99% are just great coincidences. That would still mean there would be a million miracles that have taken place. God is more active than we give him credit for.

I talked to one guy, I won't use his name. He is a scholar and he is in a denomination now that really doesn't talk much about the Holy Spirit, doesn't talk much about miracles. But he grew up

as a charismatic in a church where miracles happened a lot. And I'm talking to him and he's telling me stories from his childhood about miracles and he started to weep. He said, "I miss it. I miss that life where we were open to the miraculous and we saw it take place."

It's changed my life. It's changed me. This ought to be something that Christians can rally around and find unity in, the fact that God is still God. That shouldn't be controversial that God is still God.

You've got to believe that a church that is fractured, a church that argues among itself, a church that butts heads with itself, the Holy Spirit is not going to work as freely as if we are unified in our love for Christ and our love for people. I've got to believe as you do that when that happens the miracles will flow in a more prolific way.

James: Lee, I not only have a longing for that, I believe I join our Lord in the longing for it. And since he prayed for it we can know it is very important as well as possible. So I think for Christians to join together and pray, Lord, let us be like you are right here because you are in us. Let us become that body of believers. Let us become that literal let's say vessel through which you flow your power freely because we're so yielded.

And do you think that for us to really hold that hope up, pray for it, seek to be a part of that supernatural unity, which we're having right here, we're not having to strain to decide we're family in love with a Father wanting him to do what only he can do. Am I on target to hear that in my spirit?

Lee: Absolutely. I think that's true. I think it only makes sense that as the church is one; as Jesus prayed that we would be as one, when that happens, miracles are going to flow more naturally. I think we're going to see the power of God exhibited in a more powerful way and that's why it's so important that we root out these irrelevant arguments and so forth that just tend to divide us and rally around the core of who God is so we can celebrate that, we can worship him, and love people in that kind of freedom.

Randy: One thing I have to ask you because there is somebody out there watching right now who is saying, "I believe in miracles. I've asked for miracles. I've begged for miracles. But I haven't seen it." What do you say to them?

Lee: I knew I couldn't write a book about miracles without dealing with that question. My wife is in chronic pain every day of her life; she will be the rest of her life every day unless God does a miracle and he hasn't. A couple of things we have to remember, number one, God is sovereign. Every person I interviewed who has had an incredible miracle in their life like Barbara, I ask them, "Why you and not my wife?"

And they say, "I don't know. There is no formula. I didn't do anything to deserve it."

So God is sovereign. God will do as he will do; that's number one. Number two, keep in mind, in the New Testament healings weren't automatic either. Matthew says Jesus didn't do many miracles in Nazareth. In Matthew Chapter 10 the disciples are given the authority to heal but then seven chapters later they failed to heal an epileptic boy. Paul left Trophimus sick, didn't heal him and went off; and Paul was not healed of the thorn in his flesh. So it wasn't automatic in those days either and I think that's important to keep in mind.

And sometimes, we have to pray a prayer of relinquishment. A prayer of relinquishment is sort of what Jesus prayed Garden of Gethsemane which is where we would say, "God, I don't want to make this healing an idol. I don't love you only if you'll heal me. I love you because you are God and you loved me first. That's why I love you. I'm not going to make this a barrier between you and me. I do not know why you are not healing me but I know that you're powerful, I know you're good, I know you love me. I believe Romans 8:28 when it says you will cause good to emerge. That's not a cliché, that's biblical truth. You'll cause good to emerge from the sufferings that we go through if we're called according to his purpose."

So there is some things to keep in mind along those lines. It's still difficult to wrestle with. But you know I'm a grandfather. My little granddaughter, one of them came up to me and asked for a horse. God bless her. She loves to ride horses. But you know what? It would be a bad thing if I gave her a horse. That would be a disaster. So as a good grandfather, I had to say no. Does she understand that? No. We don't understand God's ways. He loves us and he does what is best. He sees the big picture that we don't see. And sometimes it will allow short term suffering even, allow that to happen for an ultimate good that we don't see that he does.

James: Let me just say I sure love you. God bless you. Would you say thanks to Lee? To God for using him? This is a fabulous, fabulous book written by a truly gifted God anointed author. Thank you so much, Lee for all you've offered us to help build us up in Christ and build Christ up in us; literally to help shape us.

We love to love people. We love a lot of people that are seldom noticed. I grew up knowing what that felt like because I was a poor kid that nobody ever came to my house to visit to go to church. I know what that's like. But I also know what it is like when love looks in to the darkness of anyone's situation and full expression.

You're going to see tremendous opportunity, not just need, opportunity for love to flow. Very important week, last days -- what happens will determine someone's life and even destiny. Let's let love freely flow. Watch.

On the mission field

Isak: It really just breaks my heart how the children in this village know what it means to have an empty bowl because empty bowls mean empty stomachs and empty stomachs mean going to be a night after night suffering from the pain of hunger, starvation, malnutrition and ultimately death.

The graves are full -- full of children; precious little lives, children who have a name, children who mean so much to their family, children whose lives are stolen simply because they didn't have enough food.

Open Captions:

>> Sometimes we pick leaves so we can eat for one day. I am so tired of this life. I don't know how long we can last. I have nothing. What are we going to do to survive?

[Crying]

Isak: We can end that pain. We can end the suffering of children going to bed at night with the pain of hunger. We can end the cycle of death, of mother burying child because she wasn't able to give them enough food. It is so easy to change it.

Please, give the gift of life to these children and fill the empty bowls.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I can't tell you how much I want us to pick those little children up. And maybe you didn't notice, he had just a kind of ordinary bowl but right beside him there was a big tub full of bowls like this. You know where they came from? Somebody like you kept watching these little children with their old tin cans, rusty cans, plastic bags, whatever they could bring to get something to eat, and the soup has to be hot because we're dealing with water that's not always the purest and it has to be boiled. It would burn their little fingers. Sometimes people watched them drop their little bowls or their little can and they would fall to the ground and start eating it right off the dirt.

Our viewers said, "Let's give them heat-resistant bowls. There was a whole tub of those. Love paid for that. But love did something even more important than that, it filled the bowls with a

manifestation of love. It filled them with food that was nourishing, literally established with a scientific biological overview of the very nutritional needs in that particular area, what's lacking. That's what love does.

Right now in the last week of this emphasis where a couple times a year we come and ask you to give food for the next months as a single gift. This is the last week for this emphasis. That means for the next months these children that have been impacted with a horrible drought, one of the worst in the last several decades really need our help; 400,000 of them organized. The missionaries have located them, they've said you come here and in many instances they've got something to start with. But now they're waiting to know they can continue the feeding and those lines will get longer. So as Betty prayed continually in our mission outreach, "God let the lines to feed them always be longer than those who need to be fed."

All right, that's what we need right now. This last week we need a mighty outpouring of God's love and we need it expressed in action. See not just in word but in deed. So would you right now go online or would you dial that number that's a prayer line for you if you have a broken heart or a need and it's paid for by love but would you right now in love, would you take your bankcard, go online, call the number, take that card and use it like a check? I'm asking you to make the largest gift you possibly can.

Now remember this. Listen to what I'm saying. \$30, \$50, or \$100, I'm not exaggerating, \$30, \$50, or \$100 feeds three, five or ten children for the next several months. Did you hear what I said? Would you do it right now? \$1,000 will feed 100; I'm praying for many people today who can send \$1,000. I'm going to feed 100 kids. But if you can feed three, don't consider that small. It is huge to the mothers you just saw; to those children it's life. \$30, \$50, or \$100, whatever you can do.

We've got some gifts to send you that will help you really understand and grasp God's wisdom even more clearly. We'll send it to say thanks. Please, if you write a check make it to *LIFE* but call us. Call us and tell us you're putting the check in the mail. The missionaries need to know. Thank you right now for making that gift. Thank you for doing it now.

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.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I've made it clear that this is just the last days for this period of time for the next months. Randy and I are praying, Betty is praying, everybody that loves people and sees what love does is praying, we need a lot of help to reach these children and to feed them.

We've got some beautiful gifts to send you but here, listen to me. This is a great book, great truth, great writer; if you'd like to have it and you just help us give food, a bowl, ask for it. You can get it in the bookstores, you can get it online, tell your friends to get it. Let's help those kids. And you want this book, we'll send it to you to say thank you. And I know Lee will be rejoicing in the miracle that you just brought about because of love. Would you join Randy and me in saying thanks to Lee?

Lee: Thank you.

James: You're a gift from God. Appreciate you greatly. Thank all of you here in the studio. Thank all of you at home. Thanks so much for helping. We believe in miracles.

In Studio:

James: This is the time of the year where we can consider a very special love gift, a year-end gift. I pray you'll do that because the opportunity is so great, the responsibility is great and we depend upon you. Thanks for what you do!