

1/22/19

Week four: WFL

James and Betty Robison

Francis Chan

**James:** This is absolutely amazing. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have you here and all the guests. It is amazing that somebody can write a book and it is as though people have been hearing him in stadiums or coliseums or studies, or they were like members of his church and now they're having a big family reunion or something. That's the way Francis Chan has just been welcomed. These people, they know this guy. They like this guy. I've met him. I don't know what the big deal is.

The thing is, he was here ten years ago and it was a big deal because God was leading him in an unusual way with his church in California, ultimately, leaving and now then, *Letters to a Church*. And specifically, it is, sure, back to the church he pastored but it is more than that. I think it is important that we understand that these are letters to the church. There is a "the church." There are churches, denominations, sectarian divides but there is a church.

I think I know which church it is he is writing to. Let's find out. Would you welcome Francis Chan to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

They were just thrilled we opened the show. The audience didn't know what they were talking about. But you can look at their faces out here. These people like you. You've had a positive effect. You go to a lot of churches, you look at the people, it's scary -- it's

scary! But this is a glow. I call it kind of a God glow. And you've sown seeds that produce light. So I think that makes you -- how do you feel when you look out and say, "Wow! I bless these people."

**Francis:** It is like such an honor, it is humbling. You think, I'm just loving my life. I'm having an amazing time with God and I just love being with him. And suddenly, you see other people that are impacted along the way just by watching what you're learning from him. It is always humbling. Gosh, what greater life can I be living right now?

**James:** God wants everybody to live amazed. You see people in church, they look don't like they live in amazement. They look like they've gotten embalmed. They're spiritually petrified. It is so sad. I don't understand that. I don't want any part of that. Let's write some letters to the church to see what we can do, to see if we can get them going.

**Francis:** That's the whole point of it though. That's what I was saying. I see the power that's supposed to be available to us, that is available to the church. Where he says, "Look, if you become one, you become perfectly one, the world is going to believe. There is going to be so much power in that. I mean to be possessed by the Holy Spirit?"

**James:** See, you and I are two crazy people sitting here; we've got a crazy woman sitting over here by us. All of us have this joy that he says he came to give us. And his joy is our strength. It isn't like we experience his joy necessarily; it is like when he's got joy over what he sees we find strength in that. I like to know we're making him happy.

**Betty:** We're supposed to be a vessel that his light shines through. And that light, his light attracts. And people want to know, where did you get that?

**Francis:** Scripture says we have a joy that is inexpressible. Like I don't even have words for this.

**James:** Full of glory! His glory!

**Francis:** Yes! Yes! Like yesterday I was reading in John 16 and Jesus was saying, "There's going to come this day when it is not just me praying for you, like the Father himself loves you. The Father himself..." Like that's not old to me one bit. Like for me, 30 something years in ministry, you a lot longer...

[Laughter]

But that's the key, right?

**James:** Sixty years this year I've been preaching -- 60 years! Hey, I'm 75. I'm starting at 18, I was excited then. I'm 75 -- I'm still excited! Do you think I'm excited?

**Francis:** I do! I saw that. I heard it tonight hanging out with you. I hardly ever see that.

**James:** Nobody was back -- I didn't have an audience. It is just me back stage. Does this guy go home with you?

**Betty:** Absolutely!

[Laughter]

There is no other way.

**Francis:** That's for another show.

[Laughter]

**James:** Here we go. You've got a chapter called "The Gang." And some of my staff... tell us what you're talking about there with "The Gang."

**Francis:** Well, one of my elders, one of the elders at our church came out of that background. I love him to death. He came to the Lord in prison just a few years ago. But just talks about gang life and talks about the intimacy that they had; the 24/7 we're a part of a family. When I read the scriptures, we're never meant to go to church. We were joining -- when we got saved, we were supposed to be a part of a family now. It drives me nuts that the gangs are a better picture of that than the church.

**James:** They stick together. They're more loyal to one another. They seem to have a legitimate love for one another. They've got some enemies that are pretty scared of them and rightly so, but their affection for one another, we don't even see enough of that in the ones who profess to know the author of love, the author and finisher of faith. They don't seem to act like they even know him.

**Francis:** Exactly. And my point is no gang member is going to go, "Hey did you go to gang this week?" "Oh, I missed it! We had soccer practice."

[Laughter]

It wasn't like this one hour thing you go to. Where did we come up with that? It was a family where we jumped into this group where it is like, man. What Jesus wanted from you and I, like if we were the church together, I mean he would want an oneness, a perfect oneness.

**James:** Our family life in our den, family room we call it now, great room some places call it, but in the family room we had more glory, more God, more joy than I ever saw in any big revival or any Bible conference or any church. Now I will say I'm watching some churches begin to be more like family. I've got to be honest. I think our church Gateway is very much like a great big family -- like a great big family reunion. It's like they're showing people we can actually love each other because we love God. And now we love everybody that doesn't know God. I think that's very positive.

So when you're writing letters to the church, what is the church that you're talking about?  
The one you used to be in or is this the blood-bought, born-again,  
baptized-into-the-body-of-Christ church?

**Francis:** My context is the U.S. where...

**James:** You have a focus on the U.S.? You think God wants to do something in America?

**Francis:** I do! I do! I really believe that something is happening in America. Honestly, I tried to leave at one point. I went overseas.

**James:** You went to Asia.

**Francis:** Yeah! I went to Asia.

**James:** It wasn't like you didn't have a big crowd over there. The population is pretty great so you weren't looking for numbers.

**Francis:** I guess I thought the need is over there and everything else. But then you realize, I'm not really -- I don't know the language. So I'm not real helpful over there. For some reason sometimes as Americans we think, well, if I take a flight over there I'm going to change everything. It's like I can't even speak to them. I'm more of a nuisance. And realize no, God had given me something in the U.S. and I need to steward that. And I believe he wants to do something here.

**James:** I don't think that's a mistake. So you are writing to the church but you think something needs to happen in America?

**Francis:** Yeah! It's what you were saying. What we were talking about earlier, what God has done in our lives, he wants for everyone. Somehow we've got to get away from this

celebrity culture of well, if I can only get James Robison there. He would change -- if Francis would talk to my friend then... No! It's all about the spirit of God inside of you. Like he wants to manifest through every single person.

**James:** Everyone watching, if you don't know him -- listen! If you don't know him, he wants you to come to him and know him. But then he wants you to share him.

**Francis:** Yeah. But in the church, I had a pastor share with me in Brazil. He was saying -- because I'd seen these wonderful things happening in his church, and he goes, "Yeah, but it still feels like a zoo. Do you know what I mean?" He goes, "Did you ever see that show Madagascar with the cartoon animals in the zoo? They all try to escape and they end up in the wild. They don't even know what to do because they had been domesticated. They were in the zoo." They were like, "No! You're a lion. Come on. It is in you."

And I feel like that's what's happened in the church because every single person has this tremendous power but people like myself, we almost put them in cages and go, "You can't survive unless you stay right here in this room." Let's get a cage for the singles, a cage for the college, for the high school. A real strong one for junior high.

[Laughter]

Let's just put them in there and we'll feed you every day. We'll feed you every day. And it is like, that's not what we were made for. We need to release. That's what people have to believe about themselves.

**James:** You look at people sitting in church. They look like little babies sitting here waiting for a preacher to come get the Pablum. [Sputtering] And they just get bloated up on his stuff rather than learning to feed themselves and become strong in the Word of God. They can grow. They don't have to wait to be Pablum fed.

**Betty:** Let's be honest. Some of the leaders in the church, they want to protect their congregation.

**James:** Oh absolutely! And protect them from people like you. You're a problem.

**Betty:** They don't want them going out to the different...

**James:** They'd rather you go back to Asia.

[Laughter]

**Francis:** You shared that illustration. There is one Sunday where I probably crossed a line and I went up on the stage with fake breasts. I said, "This is what I feel like every Sunday. Come on up here. Let me feed you. Let me feed you." It looked ridiculous. But it was that same point. It was like, you should be feeding yourself. You should be feeding others -- not coming to me.

**James:** We think alike. I went up with a syringe to show them a little Pablum through a little nipple. I said, "We're going to feed you." Boy, we're crazy, aren't we?

**Francis:** Same point.

**James:** When you talk about "Unleashed" what would that mean?

**Francis:** That's the exact power. It felt like for years I was trying to hoard people, like bring them into this gathering and go, "Man, look at how many people I've got." Then you realize, wait a second, I'm supposed to be sending them. Just like my children. When they turn 18, I want to know, they can get out of my house. Do you know what I mean? Otherwise I didn't do my job.

I don't want them living in my house for the rest of my life, and that's the same way it's

supposed to be in the church. Not, oh, I can't survive without your teaching. No, I should have prepared you to be able to stand on your own two feet and go out there and make disciples because you are made for this. That's what the spirit wants to do in you. Right? When you became a believer, wasn't there something, some internal change in your life where people didn't have to...

**James:** If you didn't get churchized and religionized, if you didn't do that, if you didn't get the sectarianism on you. If you get the life of God you're ready to go. You can't be held back. I'm telling you, we need to turn the church loose.

I really people listen to you and what you write. You've moved them. I think they're saying they want to walk out of this studio different. Here's the thing. If you walk out of here and you be praying this, and you at home, I want to look through the eyes of Jesus the next time I walk out and you see everybody as an opportunity to love somebody. If you realize I'm not going out to get them to sign up for our club or join our club or join our movement, I'm going out to pour the love of God on them because God loves them. I want to know where they are. Is there any way I can reach out and help you where you are? Show a legitimate interest in the people you talk to.

You can -- one of the things I did, Francis, I said, "I'm very shy." I was. It is kind of like a miracle has happened. I don't appear to be shy now but I was very shy. I said, "What I'm about to do is very hard. I need to do something and I really don't know if I can do it." They said, "What do you want to do? What do you want to do?" I said, "It kind of scares me." "What is it? Please tell me. Please tell me." I said, "I just need to ask you, have you ever met Jesus?"

But see just the curiosity got aroused. In other words, I played out of that weakness to tell them the truth about myself and then I was able to find out truth about them. But I was saying this is difficult for me but I'm doing it because I care about you. Does that make sense?

**Francis:** It totally does. That's exactly what I'm saying! Because you're sharing that in your younger days something happened internally and that's the natural outcome. The same thing with me when I was in high school. Man, I was a junior in high school, I started calling every senior in the senior year book and just going, "Hey, this is going to be the weirdest call you've ever had. But I've got to tell you about something that changed in my life." No one had to beg me.

**Betty:** No. You were compelled to do it.

**James:** How long ago was that?

**Francis:** That was 35 years ago.

**James:** My goodness!

**Francis:** That's what's supposed to happen. Too often in the church we're like pulling, please, spend five minutes with God. Come on! Just pray for a little bit. Come on, just serve the church and get away from your sin.

The Bible says if the seed of God abides in you, First John three, you can't keep sinning. If the seed of God abides in you... that's why in First John 3:16 he says, "If you see someone who is poor or in need and you've got the world's good in you, close your heart? How could the love of God be in you?"

This is natural to us. I see when you see the poor. Everything in you screams out, "I've got to do something! I've got to do something!" Why? Because the spirit is in us and he is in everyone who calls himself a believer. And if you don't have those desires to be with him and to care for the poor and to get the sin out of your life and it's something that people have to pull you into, I've really got to question if he is in you? Right?

**James:** Well, he needs to be awakened. I used to tell all our Baptist friends when I was

saved in the Baptist church, I was called to preach there, married there, but I realized that we get regimented; and even though we believe the Bible we're regimented. I used to say, "We try so hard to get Baptists to go to visitation. Go to visitation. So a few of them will come. I went to -- you know what they do? They go to the house and then right in front of the house they say, "Let's pray." And they say, "What do we pray?" They say, "Let's pray they won't be home."

[Laughter]

Now that is church folks that are not having that flow or that energy. What you're talking about, Francis, you're anointed to write. You're anointed to communicate. God has put fire in your words. This book is in the bookstores. You can get it online. I've got news for you. If you read *Letters to the Church*, and then you read the letters in the Bible to the church and church people, you're going to find that he wants to live his life through us as yielded vessels; flow the rivers of his love, the river of his life, the river of his compassion through us. And if we will yield this clay to him he will make a vessel of honor. And through that vessel can flow his will and his wisdom and his ways.

Father, I pray that for everyone watching. I pray that for everyone in this studio, that you will just flow your love through us because we simply yield ourselves to you. We want to be the most fruitful garden possible and we want that fruit to be a sweet smelling savor in your nostrils but we want it to be a beautiful bouquet revealing your glory. We want our lives to be that; in Jesus' name.

Would you say thanks to Francis Chan for allowing God to flow through him? This is a tremendous message, *Letters to the Church*, the whole church in the whole earth. Our ministry is to the whole church in the whole earth. That's what we do, that's what we're about.

I want to say this to you. If you'll do something right now to give someone a chance, even just a glance, even just a cup of water. I want you to watch. But by the way, you say,

"You know what? I'm going to be a part of that." You want the book? We'll send it to you because we want to say thank you for becoming that vessel.

I want you to look right now and I want you to listen because you're going to be moved when you hear a father. Listen closely as you watch.

### **On the mission field**

**Announcer:** Zachary just lost his wife. Unthinkably, his beloved's body was ravaged by cholera, victimized by the very water that should be life-giving.

### **Open Captions:**

>> I had a fourth child. He was still being nursed by his mother when she passed away. He died three weeks later. Our water comes from a hole in the ground. We know it's dirty but we have no other choice.

**Announcer:** And as if unsatisfied by taking his wife and youngest child, unclean water has now set its sights on Zachary himself.

### **Open Captions:**

>> My legs are swollen and my stomach is bloated. My whole body is in pain and I'm getting worse. My biggest fear is that I may die, and leave my children here.

**Announcer:** With nowhere to go and no other way to survive, Zachary has no choice but to return to the source of his grief time and again knowing that every sip has the potential to further rip his family apart.

### **Open Captions:**

>> I'm now having the same symptoms as my wife. I will have to send my children to live with their grandfather. As a father, I can no longer provide for them.

**Announcer:** For families like Zachary's in the remote country of Burundi, this crisis is not one they can face alone. Without immediate intervention and the development of clean water sources, communities will continue to be ravaged by disease and bound by grief. They ask for only one thing -- your help.

**End of clip**

### **In the studio**

**James:** I want you to put that picture of that family back up on the screen where everyone at home can look at that. You're close enough at home that you can see those precious little children. The man has buried his wife and a child that she was nursing because of contaminated unclean water and cholera, that is literally carried by that. Now he has the same symptoms.

Betty, when I looked at those precious little children, I found myself wanting to take them all in my arms and hold them real close. And I found myself asking, can I find some people who will reach out to fathers and mothers and children and families like that all over third world countries and Burundi and places like that where we drill hundreds of wells, 6,000 -- think about it, 6,000 that you've helped us drill that gives a village in a community like that life. Everything changes.

Water for LIFE and Betty, we tell them about the water of life and it is the most amazing thing. Listen to me. When you show people the love of God, you don't just talk about it, you demonstrate it, when you do that then they want to hear about the source of that love, and we're able to win them to Christ.

So I'm asking you, would you reach out to that family? And know that there are hundreds of villages. We're right now beginning, as we do this time of the year, to drill the first 200 wells. They're \$4800 each. Betty and I have committed and asked God to help us every time the missionaries call and every time we have the emphasis we want to

drill a well. God answered that prayer. It's been one of the greatest joys of our life.

We have many people who tell us we make that the goal for the year, to drill a well. That's awesome! Some of you say, "James, you don't know how much I'd like to do that." I believe you. But you know most of the income to help drill wells comes from people who give \$48? We've said that basically gives ten people water the rest of their life. You can multiply that by three and you've got \$144 and you just gave 30 people water for life. I use those numbers to show the impact it makes, to know that everyone has a part, everyone can have a part, there is no gift too small. I don't think if you've been blessed by God, there's any gift you could give too large.

Would you right now go and get your bankcard? If you want to write a check, by the way, make it to *LIFE*, that's what you're giving. But call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. If you get the bankcard, you can go online or you dial that number; that's a prayer line, others will be calling to get prayer. But would you call to be an answer to prayer? And would you say, "Here is my gift. I'm going to drill a well. Here's \$1200, here's \$2400, praying three people join me or another person joins, we've got a well." At whatever level you can participate, would you do it right now? If you want to mail the gift call us and tell us you're sending it. We need to hear from you.

We have some very special gifts to send you. You'll see them. We always want to place something in your hand that will go into your heart and be a blessing and a source of inspiration to you. Thank you right now for going online or making that life-giving call and that special gift. Thank you so much.

### **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 way for parents to save the lives of their children, to offer them a bright future free from the fear of death. With your gift today, you can help drill and establish the first 200 water wells of the year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children, a gift of \$48 will help provide for 10, \$72 will provide for 15, and \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift, we'll send you the *Praying Grace* 55-day devotional. This new devotional will help you renew your mind to the realities of God's grace and help you pray powerful grace-based prayers for each day.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "Praying Grace" tumbler. This reusable 16-ounce container is constructed with insulated stainless steel, perfect for hot or cold beverages.

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, new commemorative bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

**End of clip**

### **On the mission field**

**Tammy:** There are nearly 700 million people around the world who lack clean water. I can't even fathom. It is overwhelming to me. In fact, many in this very village are dying because of it. I would love to do something to change this for them every single day. I would love to be able to come in here with your help and drill them a water well.

Won't you consider joining me today in helping be that source of life for these precious

children? Go online, call the number at the bottom of the screen and give the very best gift you could give. It's not really life or death to us but it is life or death for them today.

**End of clip**

### **In the studio**

**James:** You see the beautiful gifts that we're going to send and that *Praying Grace* devotional book is really going to bless you. Betty says she just loves the beautiful tumbler. I thought tumbling was something you did in gymnastics.

[Laughter]

But this is actually what they say is a tumbler, and "I am praying grace." Well, you're expressing grace, I promise you, when you help give water.

If you'd like to have Francis Chan's book, *Letters to the Church*, that's to you if you know the Lord, fabulous insight, we'll be glad to send it to you. You give a cup of water, you help us reach out to families like the one you saw, we'll be glad to send this to you so you don't have a gang mentality, you have a family mentality. Francis will help you.

You want to say thanks to Francis Chan for sharing *LIFE Today*? Francis, really appreciate you, buddy. You and I have a lot of fun running around together living amazed!

Thank you for watching. Thanks for sharing life. Thanks to all of you.