

2/14/19

Week seven: WFL

Renee "Level" Martinez

James and Betty Robison

James: Well, we introduce you to a lot of wonderful, wonderful people that you think, wow! I want to show you one of the baddest people that ever lived, one of the most dangerous people, one of the meanest people; had meanness all over him. Deadly! You're going to see that but then I'm going to show you as great a miracle as I think you may have ever seen. Watch this for just a moment.

Video clip:

The Warrior Level: The Untold Story of Miami Dade County

>> I'm about to take you on a journey of my life in the real Dade County where most didn't make. I had over 300 soldiers on deck, man but most are gone, dead or in prison. This documentary is real life and the consequences of that gang life. Ever since I was a juvenile, I was in and out of jail. My life was hell. I almost died on many different occasions but for some reason, I'm still here, I must be one of God's chosen because I'm alive and free.

[Gun shots]

>> I must have been like 15 when we broke into that house when I came up on that camcorder. And even though it seems like I was caught a lot on camera, it wasn't even 5% of what we really did on these streets. But I'm glad I caught some of these moments because if I didn't no one would have ever believed me, man.

>> One day we all had a talk amongst each other and we decided to form a Latin syndicate.

>> He had that mentality, he was a leader. I could see it in his eyes, man. He was just cold.

>> Level was a name that was well known on the street.

>> When my daughter was born, I saw the meaning of life. I told myself I had to really slow down because I was really wilding out. I started bare knuckle fighting. It was the only way to make legit, fast money, man.

>> The crowd here at the Hard Rock Casino started to chant the name level. The raw talent on this kid is pretty clear.

>> When I heard his voice that day, I knew, man, it was time to surrender. I gave it all up right then and there. I got on my knees and started crying out to God. I was the leader of one of the biggest gangs in Dade County but now I put that gang in the grave. Man, it's done! My mission in life is to keep going forth from hood to hood, prison to prison, project to project, building back the walls of hope brick by brick, line upon line, showing everyone that if God did this for me, he could do this for anybody. It doesn't matter where you came from, Bro.

End of clip

In the studio

James: That's right, Renee "Level" Martinez is here.

[Cheers & Applause]

Does it hurt you some to look back and see how bad you hurt people?

Renee: You mean when I was fighting professionally? No. But what I did in the streets,

yeah, it bothers me a lot. When I fought professionally, I did it as a sport. When I did it in the streets, in the gang life it was bad intentions, it was a dark world but I can't take it back. It made me who I am today then. What can I do?

James: You had 300 members of the Latin syndicate there; you co-founded it in the Miami area. And you all were very dangerous and you know you did go to prison. You could have been there maybe your whole life. You talked about something beginning to happen inside when you had a child.

Your childhood, your mother was part of a satanic cult. I think she kind of baptized you in blood; probably dedicated you to the devil. It looked like you were well on your way to fulfilling that dedication. Tell me about that childhood. How did it get you into this situation where you were really so dangerous?

Renee: So when I was growing up my dad wasn't there. He was very abusive to my mom. My mom left him when I was about a year old. So my mom's dad was a high priest in the religion. He had just passed away so she was very depressed because she was very close to her dad. And she started drinking alcohol, heavy, snorting cocaine, party lifestyle, satanic rituals.

I remember they were killing all of these animals in the house one day, I have must have been like five or six years old and they are pouring the blood down the kids' heads, there were kids in the house. And they're killing chickens and they're pouring blood on their heads. And I knew what was next.

So I ran and hid under a couch. I was scared, man. I was scared. I remember they came and dragged me by my feet, stuck me in the bathtub and there was a goat in there and they sacrificed the goat and poured the blood down my head. And then they showered with like some kind of perfume of flowers. And immediately, I started seeing demons like the next day, like they would call my name. They would haunt me in my sleep. I would have horrible nightmares. I would hear people screaming in the house. It was very scary.

I was terrified to the point that I didn't want to be home because my mom was never home. If she was home, she was performing these rituals and they were having these parties where they said, "We're going to call the dead."

And then somebody would come and sit down and they would say, "Somebody from your ancestors is going to come possess this person and they are going to come speak to you and speak life into you."

But really it is a lie. You know it is a devil, it's a demon possessing that person. So that's all I ever saw.

By the time I was nine -- ten years old I didn't want to be home so I started hitting the streets. I lived in a gang-affiliated neighborhood *** Park in Miami. So I found family in the streets, the older dudes in the neighborhood became my brothers and that's how I grew up. So as I got older we started breaking into houses, stealing cars.

One night when I was 14, we stole a car, we went on this joy ride and cops started chasing us. We're doing speeds of like 100. We're taking red lights, we were just wilding out. No mercy like taking red lights; we just didn't want to get caught. The next thing you know, a guy goes to make a left turn, we hit them right on the driver door. I blacked out. I don't even remember the impact. I was comatose. The man died on impact. My mom comes to the hospital. The first time in her life she prays to Jesus. She said, "Jesus, Lord, I don't know if you're real. But if you're real, give me my son's life back and take everything from me." That's exactly what happened.

I snapped out of the coma. I woke up and all my bones are broken. I had pins hanging from my legs. Then after they took the pins out they stuck me in a body cast, then from the body cast into a wheelchair, and then from a wheelchair, I had to know how to walk again. I had to go through therapy.

You would have thought I'd learned my lesson, right? No! Got right back into the streets. I stole cars again, I broke into houses again. I didn't care. I got locked up for attempted murder at

16; got sent to a juvenile facility. Got out of jail.

Now me and my mom end up homeless. My mom got so depressed that she tries to kill herself one night. I found her half dead with a bottle of pills next to her and her wrists slit open. For the second time in my life, first time I was like ten years old so imagine what it did to my head.

That's one of the reasons I never did drugs. I say, "I saw my mom doing drugs." I said, "Man, that's weakness!" I always had this mentality that I wanted to be like a soldier. I wanted to be the hardest dude walking the streets. Like I had something to prove.

Man, it was just a long road to hell. It was a long road to hell. So my mom tries to commit suicide. When she gets better her and my aunt, they hadn't spoken in like eight years, they get reunited. They end up going to this church retreat. They go to this church retreat, I'm talking about, it was one weekend. My mom stops smoking weed, snorting coke, and alcohol out the window! I'm talking about I grew up seeing my mom drunk my whole youth. I'm talking about that's all I ever knew. So now she comes to me preaching this Jesus and I'm like, oh this lady is crazy! This lady is crazy! I'm like man, what is this?

So I would wake up, there were some nights I would wake up and I would have these little old ladies praying over me like prayer warriors. I would wake up and I'm like, I'd run out of the house to the point where I just moved out. I just moved out of the house. I just got heavier into the streets, in and out of jail my whole life, habitual violent offender. I had all kind of charges. It is only by the grace of God that I ain't doing life.

Half dead in a hospital like five or six times, been shot at countless times, I've had bullets graze my head, I've had a gun jammed in my face, seen my friends die in front of me. I've seen it all. I've been through it all. I've done it all. And it's only by the grace of God that I'm here. I remember that when my daughter was born I said, "Man, I've got to do something with my life but I didn't know how to let that gang life go because like I said that was my family. That's all I ever knew. So I didn't know how to let it go.

So I was a good daddy to my daughter but at the same time, I'm still gang affiliated like so I'm a

bad daddy because what if I get killed? What if I go to prison for life? Then who is going to be there for my daughter? So I mean I had to go through a lot of fire.

So 2003 I end up finding out about the bare knuckle fights. I started fighting bare knuckle. One night I walk into a church in 2003 because one of my home boys invited me to church. I was like, "Man, I'm not with that church stuff."

He's like, come on! Let's just go one time."

I said, "All right, I'll go one time." He finally convinced me.

So as I'm sitting down I'm listening to this pastor preach and I felt God like tugging at my heart. The next thing you know he does the altar call and my home boy hits me in the shoulder and he's like, "Come on! Let's go up there."

So as I'm walking up it's like something was leading me up there. But I'm balling my fists up and I'm clinching my teeth like this because I felt like I was going to cry. I never cried in my life. I didn't cry when my dad died. I didn't cry when my friends died. I didn't cry for nothing ever. And that day, I felt like I was going to cry. So I was just balling my fists up so hard. I'm like, I'm holding it and I just broke down crying like a baby -- like a baby! I cried for two days. For two whole days I cried. Two whole days.

You know what? I ran away from God like four days later. And then I started doing the bare knuckle fights like I said. I started doing the gangster music and my name got so big that they offered me a professional contract. I started fighting professional. Then I made this rap label called 1219 Entertainment trying to cover up the name of the gang. But really, it was a gang affiliated. So it was all a lie from the enemy because I said, "Oh we are real gangsters so we can really talk this gangster talk because we live it." It was all a lie from the devil.

I'm going to fast forward all the way to that date, 2015. I'm in the studio, I'm writing gangster lyrics and that demon that would haunt me my whole life I would see him in the mirror or even

when I would shave, I would see him in my face. I got held down by him. I've seen him in my dreams. I felt that demon overshadow the whole premises and I felt like death was in the room. And I felt like I was going to die. I felt like God was calling me. And I heard God telling me, "Either you come to me now or I'm going to take my hedge of protection off of you. I spared you for such a time as this."

My whole life flashed before my eyes. I seen everything that happened to me in like five seconds. Everything! All the times I was half dead but I'm still alive. All the times I was in jail but I'm free, I'm not in prison. Man, I surrendered. I started to walk, trying to learn how to walk like a disciple of Christ and I was still struggling with some things and it wasn't until 2016 that I met a man of God and he started opening the scriptures up to me because I hadn't even read the Bible. So he starts opening the scripts up to me and I'm reading. So I started reading the Bible, I started to learn the word.

He goes, "You've been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ?"

I said, "No." I said, "Man, baptize me right now!"

April 10, 2016.

[Laughter]

When I got in that water, I said, "Lord, remove these things from me" because I was struggling with some things. I meant it from the bottom of my heart. And when I came out of that water, a shift in my life happened. I promise you, it's like the old man stayed in that grave, like that's death, burial and resurrection for real! The old man stayed in that grave and a new creation rose up.

The Bible says that those who have been baptized in Christ put on Christ.

[Applause]

I put Christ on and I let him use me in a mighty way now and I go forth from hood to hood, to projects to prisons to juvenile facilities. I'm a radical soldier for God.

[Laughter]

For real! I'm a radical soldier for God.

James: So he is in Miami now. What's the website because I want all our viewers, I want them to start praying for you every day. I want them to write your name down in their Bible, Level -- Renee Level Martinez. I want them to write it down. You put Renee, Level, whatever -- that guy from the gangs in Miami, just write it down. I want you to pray for him every day. Say your website.

Renee: My website, TheWarriorLevel.com.

James: Now he is setting up a 501c3. What I want you to do, I want you to go on to that website, I want you then to start praying with him and when he gets where ministry can be there -- by the way, some of you may say, "I might be scared but I think I'd like to go down there and help them."

We minister with what was called Sidewalk Sunday School in Miami for years. We had thousands of kids coming from the little areas and their lives were being changed. It was a marvelous thing. Who knows? Some of the seeds sown then could have actually ultimately hit you.

But what you're doing right now because you're going after the people that really, the enemy has got to where they're in this horrible, deadly, depraved, defeated way. So I want you to really pray for him. I want you to go to that website, ask God about supporting him and helping him. Do you all appreciate the testimony you just heard?

[Applause]

Renee, I told you when we were visiting and I'm saying it to you again, I see Jesus in your countenance. I love you, I'm proud of you. The minute I saw you, I loved you. I know it was God. Can I just pray with you right now?

Lord, I want you to take Level to a higher level. Lord, I want you to lift him up and just hold him so close to your heart that he feels your heartbeat, he knows what's on your heart, in your heart, he wants to fulfill your heart's desire, Jesus. And I want you to put your arms around him, I want you to shelter and shield him but I want you to let him go in there and pierce the darkness with your light and win the toughest, impossible people to faith in you, Jesus. I mean I want you to use him to set not only the gangs there in the Miami, but in all the cities that you would see an awakening, God come because of what you do right here through Renee. Thank you, God! Make us all mighty warriors in Jesus' name. Amen.

Are you going to agree with us in prayer? Are you going to stand with him? And all of you watching all over the world, I want you to pray for him. There's the website again, write his name in your Bible, put it on a prayer list, get people praying for him. I hope you'll be able to post on your website testimonies of some things God is doing.

I pray God will send you somebody that will help you with your website to know how to do it and don't charge him anything for it. When you help him do it, give him some more money to help him do more. Do it now! I'm trying to help him and you do what God wants to change people that many would say are impossible.

So buddy, I'm so proud of you and so grateful. We try to get God's arms around people all over the world. You know you were overlooked. You were dynamic and everything is going on, looked like it is attention, they make movies about it. But what we find as Betty and I have gone all over the world, we've seen little kids that nobody ever noticed. And a lot of them are sick, some of them are hungry, they're starving; and when we find them you know what Jesus said? You notice the least of these, the ones overlooked, the hungry, the naked, the ones that are in

prison and bound and defeated, and you reach out? He said, "You're doing it to me when you do it to the least of these."

All of you, our viewers, have helped us help the least of these. You tell us that you have no greater joy than doing that, and that perhaps giving water because if we give a well of water, a cup of water, it just keeps giving life. Jesus said, "You give a cup of water in my name, you won't lose your reward." The blessings of God are coming through your life to others. Even in that gesture alone, big blessings.

Right now would you give more than a cup of water, would you give a well of water? Would you give toward it? I want you to listen right now, I want you to listen to the heart cry of a precious, precious grandmother and know this, you are the absolute perfect answer to her heart cry. That's not an exaggeration. You are the miracle. Watch.

On the mission field

Announcer: Recorded history tells us one of the critical factors in determining where people decided to settle was access to water. That criteria is still used today. Unfortunately, for hundreds of thousands of people around the globe, this decision can have deadly consequences.

Open Captions:

>> My grandchildren died of cholera because of bloated tummy and vomiting. It's very heartbreaking to lose my grandchildren.

Announcer: Each day as Antoinette returns to a small stream to collect water, it serves as a reminder of the deaths of her grandchildren. She told our team that one grandchild died at a clinic where she had taken him. And by the time she returned home, her other grandchild had died as well.

Open Captions:

>> I can't find words to describe, to say what I miss about my grandchildren. But what I know is that I will never forget them. They are still in my heart.

Announcer: The pain of losing her grandchildren once brought her thoughts of suicide but somehow Antoinette is still able to hope for a better life.

Open Captions:

>> If we could get clean water, this would bring real change in our village and in my family. My children and everyone would no longer suffer from those diseases due to unclean water.

Announcer: We can turn Antoinette's plea of *if* she can get clean water into *when* by drilling a well that provides her and her village the gift of life: Fresh, clean, drinking water.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Can you imagine trying to save a child or a grandchild's life and then go back to find out that you lost the one at home, the one that had been drinking contaminated water?

I'm holding clean water right here and the words on this beautiful cup that we've given people through ever season, "He is faithful." How does God express his faithfulness? Through our faithfulness to him and our love. It is love that never fails. Do you know what the answer for that situation is that she was talking about? It is clean water. Jesus said, "If you will give a cup of water in my name you won't lose your reward."

You see there is a phone number there on the screen? It is a prayer line. Do you know even now while we're talking about saving lives, 80-85% of all calls that come in, if there were 1,000 calls that come on that line, 800-850 of them would be please pray for me -- broken heart. That's what it's there for.

But in this moment I'm asking you to make it an answer-to-prayer line. People are going to keep calling because they need prayer. Because we want to pray for them, we love them, we care. So we share their burdens and we try to help them see their load lightened by God.

But if you would right now make this an answer-to-prayer line, make it a lifeline, and say, "I'm not only going to give a cup of water in Jesus' name, we're going to help provide a well of water for that entire community."

Did you know that a gift of \$48 will give ten people water the rest of their life? Where can you put \$48 that will have more impact?

\$4800 and we've given an entire community, an entire village water for the rest of their life. That's amazing, isn't it? If you can give a water well, please do. Many people tell us it's the greatest joy of the entire year for them. For some, they say it is a real effort, James but it is a joyful effort. There are some that can give even more than a well and we have those who will do it. Thank God for that! Aren't you grateful? Answer to prayer.

Whatever you can do, do it. You may say, "James, I can't give the \$4800 but I can give \$1200 and pray three join me." Do it! Pray they join you but you start the process. \$2400, pray one more joins you and we've got another well. \$48, 10 people water the rest of their life; could you do that?

Would you right now make the gift God puts on your heart? Please do it! The number there, just call it, or go online, take your bankcard, use it like a check. If you write a check, call us and tell us what you're mailing in but make the check to *LIFE*. Thank you so much for doing it. You're becoming the miracle someone's heart longs for. You are becoming the answer to prayer. You're going on the answer-to-prayer line. You become the answer. Please do it right now. Go get that card and act now as God directs. Thank you.

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**

Randy: Many of these precious children behind me have lost siblings, playmates to waterborne illnesses. We can stop that cycle of death. It is as simple as giving them a cup of clean drinking water. Each water well will serve about an average of 1,000 people.

Look at all of these kids behind me. We can reach into areas -- this area and so many more just

like it and save thousands of lives just by giving them clean drinking water. I pray you'll do what you can right now. Go to the phone, go online, make the best gift you can. And when you do, know that you'll be saving precious lives all around the world with water for life!

In the studio

James: I'm sitting here with Betty thanking God for the fact you're going to give a cup of water. But I'm rejoicing. I don't think we've ever had a more powerful, dynamic testimony of the impossible happening. And see, I think just the greatness of all of it, the magnitude of it is just getting started. I just believe -- just join not only Miami, but for the gangs everywhere would have a head-on encounter with Jesus.

Father, we just all join it and pray that. Thank you for it.

Thanks for watching. Thanks for sharing *LIFE Today*. Thanks for helping us give water. Would all of you here say thanks to Renee Level Martinez?

[Cheers & Applause]

Praise God! Thank you for watching. Tell your friends to watch *LIFE Today*. It's worth the time.