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Week 18: Spring Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Kim Walker Smith

James: Thank all of you. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. Our son Randy got very excited just maybe several weeks back, maybe a month or more, started talking about Kim Walker Smith. And he said, "Dad, you just don't understand. She is a worship leader."

And Randy is quite a musician and he also is a praise and worship leader. And he even leads a Spanish congregation in worship. Of course, he amazes me. I can say taco, burrito and enchilada but I don't do too well with Spanish. But he can handle it. He just said, "This is a very special person."

I've got to tell you after meeting her and just being around her, then also just kind of doing some of the research because I'm not into all of the -- I love praise music. I'm into praise music and so forth. Gateway is real well known for praise worship. And our Bible conferences helped inspire praise worship all across all denominational lines years ago. It was a great force in encouraging that.

But this young lady with Jesus Culture, which she probably helped Jesus Culture become Jesus Culture in a lot of people's eyes. Kim just God came on her and God came on her when YouTube was just getting started, and it went out and it just got legs is an understatement. And to say that the whole Bethel Church there in Redding, and then the Jesus Culture, all that was just a high impact situation.

But when you meet Kim who's written a book called *Brave Surrender*: Let God's love rewrite

your story, and you realize that this came from "Oh, How Much He Loves Us," the love of God is just pouring through her, that's what just took off is the love of God. It's what Betty and I have been captivated and captured by and carried by is the love of God and his compassion, and the viewers of *LIFE Today*.

Well, this young lady is a gift from God. This story is the story of God's word in her life. I'm really anxious for her to just share her journey to bring her to this point of understanding just how much God loves us all.

Would you welcome Kim Walker Smith to *LIFE Today*?

Kim: Thank you. Thanks.

James: Glad to have you!

Kim: Thank you.

James: Now you've got a beautiful smile. I've been around you, you've got the joy of the Lord. It's not a facade. But you had a pretty rough start. I mean, you had some pretty shaky times. Tell us about it because you tell the story quite detailed in the book. You can't cover it as thoroughly so we want people to get the book but tell us about the journey and then tell us what happened and how you got where you are right now.

Kim: My biological dad was in a really serious motorcycle wreck when I was two years old. And my mom was pregnant at the time, and had me, a two-year old. Unfortunately, I think she got married at 18, she had me at 19. I think just being young and having two little babies, their marriage did not survive all of that. So they divorced when I was four. After that I had three stepfathers, and two of those three stepfathers were really abusive. My upbringing was very much filled with a lot of pain and a lot of fear.

At some point I kind of stepped away from childhood and the innocence of childhood, the

carefree thinking of childhood and took on this responsibility and understanding that I have to take care of me, I have to take care of my mom, I had to take care of my siblings.

We went to church off and on throughout this time. My grandparents went to church and they would take me when we would go and be with them. But my understanding of God and church through all of this was if you are a good person you go to church sometimes on a Sunday morning but it was more of a ritual in my mind. I kind of saw God as maybe a cranky old man who lived in the sky or in the church building, I wasn't sure which. Jesus was the one I saw with my grandparents during the Easter musicals every year. And I would say, "What are they doing to that man?"

It wasn't until I was about 11 years old that my mom, as a single mom, before she married my third stepdad, it's summer time and she is working and summer time kids are not in school she had to do something with us and she sent me and my sister to a church camp. At that church camp it was a Pentecostal church camp and I didn't know what Pentecostal was.

I just saw these kids going up every night and lifting their hands and having some sort of encounter; they're falling over, they're speaking in tongues, they're worshipping, whatever it is and every night I just thought, what a bunch of weirdos. It was freaking me out. Me and my sister we would sneak out the back and go back to our cabin and hide.

On the last night we go back to the cabin, we're hiding like normal but this time it is just silent and I feel this hunger inside of me. I say to my sister: I don't know what those kids have but I really want it too."

And my sister was like, "Me too!"

I said, "I'm kind of scared."

She's like, "Me too!"

[Laughter]

But I said, "I'll go back if you will."

She said, "Okay!"

So we walk back and we're holding hands. I walked up to the counselor and I tapped her on the shoulder. She turned around and to my surprise I start crying. And I say, "I don't know what these kids have but I want it too!"

And my sister goes, "Me too!"

[Laughter]

Before she could even put her hand on us to pray for us I just felt this wind come over me and I fell over and my sister fell over on top of me and we both started speaking in tongues.

I couldn't communicate as a child what was going on but I said, "I met God and I think he loves me." And this is what I experienced.

When we got home I said, "Mom will you take me to this church?"

So we go Sunday night and that Sunday night when worship started I just felt compelled to express something. I've got to get up there. I've got to worship. I've got to do something. I go up to the front and I just start hands up dancing and singing in tongues because I didn't know the songs so I just thought, well, I have this new language, I'll just do that.

[Laughter]

And after a few moments a woman came and grabbed my shoulders and walked me over and sat me down.

Now, as an adult I can look back and I can say, I think they were trying to transition. Move on from worship, go to the speaking, go to the next thing. But for a little girl I didn't understand what was happening and I just felt ashamed and I felt embarrassed like I had done something wrong. And my little heart, it felt like a betrayal. Like I opened myself up to something for a moment and suddenly it brought some pain. I couldn't handle that and I just shut everything down in that moment.

That's when a big wall went up and that's when anger really started to evolve inside of me. My mom married my third stepdad shortly after this and he was a very solid Christian who made church a very consistent thing in our lives and in our family. He was the first person that I saw have a real relationship with God that didn't exist within the walls of the church. It was lived out in his everyday life, all of his prayers, everything being spoken out loud.

You know, as a teenager now at this point I'm so angry and I'm so hurt and I remember even mocking him, making fun of him for praying his prayers out loud and for having this relationship. At one point, my mom and my stepdad sat me down and I know that they saw I was so broken and hurt and they really wanted to help me, and they kept saying, "Why can't you just forget about the past? Just move on. Just let it go."

But I had no grid for that. I didn't know how.

And they said, "Kim, it is not your job to take care of mom anymore. You just need to be a kid -- just be a kid!"

But that -- I know you're trying to help me get free but all that did was bring more rage inside of me because I thought, I walked away from my childhood a long time ago. I don't know how to get that back. I don't know how to find that again. I don't know to be a kid.

It just kept growing and building and the depression became heavier. In my senior year of high school I just couldn't take it anymore and I tried to end my life. I attempted to kill myself by

taking a bunch of pills. I woke up and I didn't have a single symptom -- not a stomach ache, not a headache, nothing. It was as if nothing even happened.

The first thought in my brain was, you must really be real and I think that you really love me. I said, "I will give my life to you. I will never look back. If you'll please just set me free."

I didn't know how big that would be because what happened next was a journey of years of walking through inner healing and truly allowing God to teach me about forgiveness and the layers of forgiveness. It was not something that happened overnight. It was not something that happened even in one setting. It was over and over, multiple times.

I really -- I really felt like God, I say in my book that he rewrote my story. I say it that way because I felt like through the inner healing process it's like he gave me new eyes to now look back. And when I would look back I could the pain and I could all the hardships that I walked through but I saw him so much more. And I saw his incredible love that he had for me even then. And that he took every single thing, nothing in my story went to waste with him. He used every single bit of everything I walked through and created something beautiful out of all of those ashes, out of all that brokenness, something that only he could do and in a way that only he could do it.

Getting through that process was really what began my journey as a worship leader. That wasn't my plan. I didn't plan on becoming a worship leader but I fell in love with the one who loves me and in my pursuit of him, that's kind of where I ended up.

James: And then when you sang on that new thing, YouTube, that you didn't even know you could be on there, and you didn't particularly like the way you did some things there. But millions and millions of people saw it, "Oh, How He Loves." And you kept singing it and you went into another heavenly realm. God was all over it. Even when I looked at the old version when YouTube was barely going -- I wish YouTube would get under the holy oversight of God.

But the point is that something happened and something happened to Jesus Culture, something

happened to everything in your life. When you look back now, because that love, and you can look back and see oh how he loves, oh how he loves, and our whole ministry, when you see what we do, we're just showing people the love of God for people that never even knew that God ever noticed them and most of the people never notice them. They're "the least of these" Jesus talked about. Boy, that loved just flows.

So when you see where you are now and you told me, "You gave me one of the greatest messages I heard."

I said, "What are you doing now?"

You said, "Well I've just kind of slowed down. I'm going to stay home and take care of my three children. I'm going to homeschool."

I said that's -- high five! I could say right there. That's one of the wisest greatest things I've ever heard.

I didn't have that wisdom. I did too much. The church will use you up. We've got to be careful there that we let God direct us. Jesus taught us. He kept getting away with the Father even when big things were happening, he would get away with the Father. We need to learn the importance of that. We really do. So I was happy when I heard you saying that.

But when you look at your journey now and you know what you're going to be doing and you see what's happening, what do you want people to take away from the book story, what do you want the rest of your life to say? Because you are going to be singing, you are going to be doing worship, you're going to continue to be a blessing. What do you see the Lord showing you right now that you would like people to hear?

Kim: Well, I feel like I'm a little bit of a broken record as a worship leader talking about and singing about the love of God but that's because it so radically changed my life. And it's not a little thing, it's not a small thing. I like to try to challenge people, especially if you've been raised

in church.

You say, "Jesus loves me" like it's just Bible talk; you know, like we learn in Sunday School. It's kind of this thing that's like, "Oh, yes. Jesus loves me. I know." It's like the Christian thing to say. But I feel like it's completely different when you say Jesus loves me because I have this burning conviction inside of me. Because I have tasted that love and I have experienced that love. I have felt that love tangibly. And that's what I want for people. That's what I hope they get out of this book. That's what I hope they experience in worship.

And the other thing that was so important for me in my journey, I'm a little bit of a justice person. I get those justice buttons pushed. I want justice. That was a big journey for me in what I walked through with the Lord, was realizing that with all the pain and just trying to learn how to forgive the ones who hurt me, forgive the woman at the church who sat me down and I felt shame after that, forgive the men who abused me, I realized there was something in me that associated justice with punishment. Like, "God, I want you to punish those who hurt me."

I felt the Lord say, "Kim, who is your enemy?"

And my first answer was like, "They are."

And the Lord said, "Who is your enemy?"

And suddenly realized I have one enemy who is defeated at the cross, and this whole time I've been making people my enemy. I realized that the strategy of the enemy is that when I make people my enemy the first thing I do is put distance between myself and them. And just like all the analogies in the Bible of the sheep and the flock, if you separate yourself from the flock you are suddenly left vulnerable to the wolf, to the enemy. I realized that by making people my enemy and separating myself from them, suddenly I was leaving myself vulnerable to even more of this onslaught from the enemy. I was leaving myself trapped and in bondage to fear and to shame and to anger and all of these things; the unforgiveness that I was holding onto.

I had to truly learn how to forgive not once but over and over and over. And trust God with the justice and with the outcome, both in my life and in those who hurt me. And also recognizing that justice how I saw it, number one was wrong. But also, God sees justice so different. I realized that true justice is that I'm standing here today. True justice is that I've given my life and I'm serving him. True justice is that I'm starting something new in my family. I'm breaking those old generational things and doing something new and amazing that everything the enemy tried against me he did not succeed. That is true justice according to God.

James: That's grace and justice. That's grace!

[Applause]

And you were overwhelmed with, "Oh, How Much He Loves Us" and his love, and you want it to flow. So you're just going to let that flow with your family and everywhere you go, and encourage it to flow through everybody. That's what you hope people see when they make a *Brave Surrender* and whatever it takes.

You want to say thank God for Kim and thank God for the book that's in the bookstores?

But Kim, we find no greater joy than showing people the love of God in action, not just in word. We say oftentimes we love not in word only but in deed. That's as biblical as it gets. We express our love with action. Right now I'm going to show you a place where you can release this love of God and it changes everything for right now and for eternity. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: There is a crisis in areas of South Sudan because mothers have no food for their children. Emotions run high among our mission team as these scenes of desperation play out. Isak Pretorius is motivated more than ever to carry on the fight against starvation on the continent of Africa that his dad Peter Pretorius began over 40 years ago.

Isak: James, you know, you and dad, you traveled all over this continent. And God took your heart and my dad's heart, and literally knitted them together. You became the best of friends. But more than that, you became the best of servants to this continent. I can tell you this because it makes me recommit my life, recommit my promise that I made to my dad that we will continue to serve our continent, that we will serve the people of this continent, that we will continue to strive for what was his dream and is mine, and that is that no child go hungry.

The situation here at the moment is desperate. It is really is at a crisis level. We've been to villages here where mothers have told us how their children have died because they have literally starved to death.

So I'm asking you please, James, from the bottom of my heart, speak to the viewers. Ask them -- ask them to do whatever it is they can do. Appeal to them, James because we need your help today! And I know that you know that they are the true heroes, the ones that make it possible for us to be here. The ones that make it possible for us to save lives are the true heroes. But without them, another child dies today because we didn't get there in time.

Please, James, do whatever you can do because this is about life and death.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, I thank you, Isak. Thank you for the way you communicate the love of God, and the compassion you have for the people there in your own country, your own continent, all over it. And yes, your dad and I did go and put God's arms of love around millions of people together, and we continue to because of the viewers like you said, "Speak to the viewers, it is because of the viewers."

Peter Pretorius said to me many times, "The greatest Christians in the world are the people who

keep us here and enable us to do what we do and not be empty-handed."

So, Betty, it was a joy for me to see Luke there. And when he came back he said, "Papaw, you just cannot believe the tremendous need and hurt."

He actually came back talking about they wanted to bring three kids home and his wife sitting there with me and Betty and saying, "If we go over there and get them we'd bring them. They're teen-aged down to about ten."

And I said, "Luke, I don't think it is possible to do it."

But he said, "Papaw, we just want to take care of them."

That's the love of God, and that's what we see. And when you see it in your grandchildren and know how real it is, and then you know that when they're saying like Isak did, "Ask the viewers to please help these children."

Where Isak was talking that was the place where, and we don't talk about this on the air, but we also equip those centers that are the malnutrition clinic where children go at the last stage. And we feed them intravenously, we give them a kind of content they can contain and hold to try to get them back.

But it is like Isak said, we've got to get them before they get here. We've got to get out in the area where we've got these 400,000 located. And by the way, they were very specific about the thousands they located in those areas and they had them ready to come together, promising the hope for food. And it depends upon us to keep them there, to be sure they have the food, and it depends upon our support.

So, Betty, I'm praying that every person watching will do whatever God leads them to do. Let me just clarify something. For \$30, for \$50, or for \$100 we can feed three, five or ten children for several months. It's not total child care. This is life-saving nutritious food. It's in the form, most

of the time, what we would call a porridge or a heavy thick mix of oatmeal that's been scientifically designed for the nutritional need in that particular region of the continent. So it is very precise and very, very effective. You don't save millions of lives with something that's just wishful thinking. We know it works. 400,000 right now. We need your help to feed them.

Would you go online or dial that phone number and take your bankcard and would you make the best gift you can? Would you be an answer to the request that missionary, Isak Pretorius just made to you the viewer? Would you please make the best gift you can? If you could give \$1,000 we can feed 100 kids. \$100, we can feed ten. \$30 or \$50, three or five. We have some gifts to send you to say thank you to be a blessing to you. But you're giving the greatest gift of all, you're giving them life because of the love of God and we're going to point them to the God who loves them and the Son he gave for them. And they will have already seen his love in action through you.

Please go get that bankcard. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. Thank you for doing it.

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.

Through *LIFE's* mission feeding outreach you can save lives by feeding and caring for children currently suffering from starvation in parts of Angola, Mozambique and South Sudan.

With previous reserves gone and mission feeding helping in areas of great famine, we urgently need your support to replenish food supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us. Your life saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children.

With your gift we'll send you *The James Code* by O.S. Hawkins, an outstanding devotional to help you go from knowing about God to living for God, and putting your faith into action. You will also enjoy this beautifully grafted leather bookmark.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request *The Passion* translation Bible. This New Testament edition including Psalms and Proverbs ignites *The Passion* of the Bible to modern readers by merging *The Passion* of God's heart for his children with the life-changing truth of his word.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our commemorative bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call write or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I want to thank you for your response. I say that on behalf of mothers, lots of mothers. You've seen some. You've heard the feelings of some, you've seen what's there. You sense what the missionaries feel. We're asking you to help and thanking you for that. I just praise God for your love.

Kim Walker Smith has been a tremendous blessing to us. Would you like to say thanks to her for being here? And her book is in the bookstores. I will say this to you, you help us, you help us take care of these kids and feed them, you want Kim's book, just say, "Will you send it to us today?" You better believe we will.

Kim, we're going to debut something here that you tell us what it is.

Kim: This is a song called, "Just Be." Debating it here. This is the first time I've actually done

it all, it's a brand-new song.

James: All right. And you can see that on line. Go to LifeToday.org and you can watch what we're going to see right here in the studio right now. Thanks for watching *LIFE Today*.