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Week 40: Mission: Rescue Life

James and Betty Robison

Rebekah Lyons

James: Thank you. Thank all of you. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. I just told all the group here in the studio how much we love the least of these and the too often overlooked. And when we have shared these least and overlooked, and we will be sharing with you precious children sold into sexual trafficking -- you're going to be moved deeply. But now listen to me. What we've learned about the viewers of *LIFE Today* is you don't overlook the least of these, you reach out with arms of love and get them up close to the heart of God. It is a miracle.

Let me ask you to do something else. How about you join us and the family of God and the body of Christ in getting God's arms of love around a hurting nation and a hurting world? Because I'm not ready to give the future of the people God loves so much over to the deceiver and the destroyer. I don't think you are either. Don't you folks think it is time we stand up as the family of God and show people how great our Father is?

We have a guest today that in my opinion she reminds me a lot of Betty because sweet is an understatement, precious is appropriate, but really gifted by God miraculously being changed. As a matter of fact, she so moved me the last time she was here -- literally, I came under conviction. I asked her to pray for me. Boy, did she pray. As she prayed for me she blessed so many viewers.

Rebekah Lyons, this is her third book. This one is called, *Rhythms of Renewal*: "Trading Stress and Anxiety for a Life of Peace and Purpose."

Can you believe she was about to go crazy with anxiety? Boy, God has put some peace on her and you're going to enjoy her. Would you welcome Rebekah Lyons back to *LIFE Today*? Rebekah, glad to see you.

I want you to just take off and share your journey that you really cover so well here. But a lot of things have been happening. It's hard maybe because you have a countenance of peace right now. You say, she doesn't have anxiety! She is probably not even anxious about being on television. But okay. Just take off and tell us about your journey and about some pretty meaningful experiences you had even recently related to what you share.

Rebekah: It is such a joy to be with you. Every time I look forward to it. Thank you for having me again. What a gift and a privilege.

So the back story just to catch everyone up is that I first had my panic attack, my very first one about nine years ago. We had moved to New York City. It happened about four months in. What began that day on an airplane continued on planes, trains, elevators, subways and crowds. Has anyone ever been to New York City? All of the sudden that was my new reality. After about a year and a half the Lord filled me with the peace of Christ and I began to walk out a healing journey. So then, because I'm a chronic over-share, God gave me a story I couldn't shut up about. So I wound up writing it in two books and I began to teach and talked about the peace that Christ gives the world cannot give.

So I was just transformed by his mercy. The place of panic where it all began was on an airplane then all of the sudden, God's like I'm going to put you on an airplane every Friday and you're going to talk about the rescue of God. So what was a place of panic is now a sanctuary in the sky. That's what God does. He just takes our pain and turns it into purpose.

So nothing happened with me regarding panic disorder for six years. I didn't have my next panic attack for six years and that's how I began this book. And what happened in

that moment, out of nowhere, out of nowhere I'm locked in a bathroom in a hundred-year-old home on the cliffs of the Pacific and the house is empty and my cellphone dies and I know I'm going to be alone in this cell, it is like a little toilet area in a bigger bathroom. I couldn't toggle the lock, nothing is opening and Gabe's gone, our friends are gone. I'm going to sit in this cement cell for the next two hours until someone comes back. And something rose in me unlike any other panic attack I'd ever had. It was like times ten magnified. It was almost as if I knew it was coming on and I felt so powerless to it. And within a few seconds my head is spinning, I'm literally losing all sense of control. And I was more afraid of myself and what the fear was taking over.

Then all of the sudden I look up and above the toilet area there is this antique window that's probably about this big. And I'm thinking, I wonder if that thing will open? And second of all, I wonder if my hips are going to fit through that thing.

[Laughter]

So I climb up on the back of the toilet and I like toggle the lock and lo and behold, the window opens even though the door won't.

So I open the window and I just breathe in the salty air overlooking the cliffs. I was like, Jesus, I don't know if these hips are going to work but we're going for it. So I just pushed myself out and scraped all the way down and landed on the rocks below. I felt just -- my legs were just trembling and I felt covered in shame.

I said, "I don't understand. Am I a fraud? Why would this be the worst epic panic attack that I've ever had in the history of all nine years?" And I wrestled with the Lord for a few hours. It wasn't until that night where I'm laying in the dark and the tears are pooling from my eyes to ears and I heard just in my spirit, I just heard, "Rebekah, I don't promise that fear won't come knocking but I always promise a way of escape."

It was almost like a revelation for me. Because my life verse had always been, "I don't

give you a spirit of fear, Rebecca, I give you power, love, and a sound mind." But that doesn't mean that that spirit of fear doesn't still want to come around the corner and catch you in some bathroom stall six years later. And we all have different versions of fear, anxiety became my fancy word for fear. I think I needed to be reminded in that moment that then gave birth to these rhythms of walking. Because the last book was really about getting free, getting pulled from that pit. But this book is about walking free and living free in communion.

So what he's saying is, if I always promise a way of escape it means I am Immanuel, I am with you. And just when you think all the doors are closing, all the sudden this window opens. I think in our lives what do we do when relapse hits? Or when we think we've kind of had a breakthrough in a moment and all of the sudden we feel plagued or we feel oppressed or we feel like we're kind of spinning out.

And then, all of the sudden, it's a crisis of faith. It can be. The enemy can just say, oh yeah, God didn't really mean it. Your faith isn't strong enough. God's like, no, I just want to remind you that my strength is made perfect in your weakness and apart from me you are nothing. And it is just this reminder to me like God, I'm not even so much afraid of the fear as I am of you not being with me in it. I want you to be my portion, my daily everything.

So these rhythms just flew, came from that because I was like, God, what is it going look like to walk with you in cadence every day, every morning, every night, every spring, summer, fall, winter, every year?

James: You said something before we walked out here and I want you to break down the four things, but you said something happened related to an event that moved you very, very deeply. Do you mind sharing that what that was? Because you told us about this attack that's in line with you wanting people to have these *Rhythms of Renewal*. And boy, God doesn't want us to trust what happened or that we failed his presence once, he wants us to know if we don't sense his presence it's always there. He will never leave us.

We can live in the reality of that and we don't trust mere feelings or the suggestions or the arrows of the deceiver, we trust him. So you found that.

Rebekah: Right!

James: But you said something happened that was a very meaningful encounter and it wouldn't have been one you would expect. I really wish you would share that.

Rebekah: Well, right around the time I'm writing this book and doing a lot of research about it, my dad died, last April. I found myself in May just facing depression. I was familiar with this visitor. It had been about seven years but I knew what it was. And I remember thinking, I don't want to hemorrhage publically. And I called a friend.

And so I decided like the first rhythm of this book is rest, because it is the rest and restore. It is the inner life, the inner health to get quiet. So that whole summer I took a tech detox. I got off all social media for three months. And I just said, God, I need you to restore my soul. I want my inner life to be healed through you and I know grief isn't something you can race through. You actually have to allow it to happen when it is ready to come. Because if you can't grieve you can't be comforted. And I didn't want to stifle that wave when it was ready to come because God's like I'm going to meet you here. I'm going to meet you here again.

Right before my dad died my mom gave me his study Bible from when I was two years old. And my dad had been a pastor before I was born, and then he wound up being a teacher with my mom for years and years and years. When I opened the inside of the Bible it said at the top in my dad's penmanship, "Depression Stoppers." And when you looked, he listed out seven verses and seven truths that he would recite over himself. It reminded me...

James: Dealing with depression?

Rebekah: Yes! Dealing with worry, stress, and anxiety. It reminded me, this is a way of escape, right here. This is the daily rescue of God again and again and again and again because sometimes the muscle memory of anxiety or depression can be our default. If something stressful we're like oh, I can't get a deep breath. I physically start to feel the symptoms of that. In fact, the American Institute of Stress says right now in our society 77% of us are showing physical symptoms of stress. And that's where stress starts to amplify into anxiety because the body is now going, I can no longer contain the emotional stuff going on inside.

I believe it is God's creativity to go, okay, I'm going to help your body auto correct possibly the things that you've taken on or shoved down or you didn't allow yourself to fully process or grieve because there is an inner healing that needs to happen. So those rhythms really were my life source in that healing process. Those two input rhythms of rest and restore. The book is broken out into four rhythms. I just wanted to keep it practical and simple.

James: I love it! I love "rest and restore." You've touched that so well. By the way, you break it down point by point. It is absolutely, absolutely beautiful. But then the last two, "connect and create." Expound on that a little bit.

Rebekah: Well, the first two are input rhythms because you can't give what you haven't received. So rest is the inner life and restore is the physical life; so spiritual health and physical health. But then once you have actually taken a lot of time like taken a walk and learning routines for deep sleep again, I wanted there to be data and science in every chapter paired with scripture. I know God made our bodies and he gave us his word. He's like these things need to come together so you understand what I have for you.

Then when you've been filled up, the output rhythms are: Connect and create. So output is your relational health. It is your marriage. I write a chapter on vulnerability or conflict resolution or parenting or apologizing first. Be the friend you wish to have. I wanted it to be practical.

And then the last one is create. It is all about calling and vocation. What are the passions and the gifts that God established in the womb? That he wants to fill you up and inspire you to go out and use those things.

James: Wow!

Rebekah: When my dad died, we had just said yes to adopting a six-year old from China. Our oldest is 18 and he has Down syndrome; then we have two more that's 16 and 14. And just when we think we're going to be empty nesters in five years, God is like, "No, you're going back to kindergarten." So he brought this treasure in our path and we had said "yes" to adopting a little girl named Joy from China and we were in the waiting period. And then my dad passes. And then in this anxious moment I was full of fear. I was like what am I thinking? I'm 40 something. What are we doing going back to kindergarten? And I was just filled with doubt and fear and like, we've made a mistake. That's what will happen is you'll make these bold statements with faith and right before you're ready to actually see the fullness of that obedience, the enemy is like, I'm just going to just throw her an accusation. I'm going to throw something in her way to make her question everything.

And all I heard in my spirit was, "Fight death with life -- fight death with life." Death, yes, your dad is gone for a season but he is in eternal life. I remember the veil was so thin. So here we are, seven months later, we are going to pick up Joy from China. Our "gotcha day" was in December, my dad had passed in April, and God said, "Just make her middle name your dad's name." So she's Joy Levi, his middle name was Levi but I pronounce it Levy, Joy Levi She Lyons. Because it was just this full circle moment of like... and I got to tell my dad we were adopting before he passed. I whispered it in his ear.

I just know that it was God's way of saying like, there is going to be mourning and there is going to be a rejoicing and that's part of the cadence of life, the rhythm, right? There is

going to be death, there is going to be resurrection. There is going to be grief, there is going to be joy but I'm with you in all of it.

James: Y'all appreciate this woman? Here is the book, *Rhythms of Renewal*. What you sense here, the spirit that is all over this precious girl is all in this book. It's the joy of the Lord that's our strength. It is not just that we have his joy. The fact that he has joy over us. It is the smile of his pleasure at the fruitfulness that he can produce in a yielded life, any field yielded to him, any clay yielded to his shaping process.

I'm telling you right now, we have an opportunity. I've said it in the beginning of the show and I've said it to the audience here, we've got an opportunity to show a hurting world, too often a fatherless world and fatherless nation, the perfect Father revealed in the family that he loves perfectly and he wants to love through us. I really want you to drink deep of that truth. We have been left here to reveal the Father. Jesus reconciled us to him; prayed that we would know him as he does. And that we would love one another like the family of that Father. Let's do it.

I don't think there is a single person watching that when you see what you're about to see, that will not be so moved by one of our friends, ten grandchildren, and yet she keeps going to the ends of the earth, leaving those precious grandchildren, her own children, to go over and put the arms of love around the overlooked.

Now watch this. You're going to see a mother that has plenty to do, plenty of responsibility but she wants to get God's arms around someone that's been trafficked from the time she was seven and then nine, and then used in the most horrible way. Listen to me! I want you to see what love does. Because we can get God's arms around these precious ones and totally set them free. No exaggeration. You're going to want to do this. Watch!

On the mission field:

Kirie: I can't think of anything worse to happen to a child.

[Translator]

Kirie: I'm so sorry a human did that to you. It's not your fault.

Open Captions:

>> One day, when I was seven years old, I was out working in the field. Two strangers lured me away with candy and took me across the border. I was given to a family and I had to work as their maid. I was forced to do these chores for about 18 months.

Then when I was eight or nine, they took me to another place. I saw all these men and they explained what I had to do. I was only nine years old. They said they would kill me if I didn't do what they said. Every day I wished that someone would get me out of there. But no one came to help for many, many years.

Kirie: Mara has taken the time to open up her heart and relive horrible, horrible experiences and wounds so you understand what's going on. Many of you have no idea and cannot even imagine that something this horrible could happen to a child -- but it happens every day. We can stop that.

So if you're watching us today and in your heart you feel like well, that really speaks to me. I'm asking you to go beyond that thought and to take action. We can't get back her childhood, but we could keep others from experiencing this horrible way of living.

End of video

In the studio:

James: I just thank God for the love of God in Kirie. I started loving her husband when he was six years old. His dad was the first chairman of my board, our ministry, and that

was gosh, nearly 60 years ago. He's the first businessman I ever saw that just loved Jesus with all his heart. That would be her father-in-law. They have become some of the greatest supporters we've ever had. I just love them so much, their whole family.

Betty, when you saw her holding that woman and realized that as a seven-year old they told her they would get her a job. She worked kind of like a housekeeper and then she became at nine a prostitute. If she didn't do what they said they'd kill her.

What goes on in your heart when you realize that there's several things there. She's a prisoner. But the men that will use those children for their own gratification are prisoners too. Do you realize how horrible a person has to be addicted or hooked and do you realize how much freedom they need to experience and only God can give them that freedom through Christ? We need to be praying for them. Do you realize how sick and how addicted and what a prisoner people are that would do that? But that's the extremes people are going to today. It's unbelievable. God can change that. And he will through us with love.

What goes on in your heart when you realize that we can head off because you've seen it happen. We've been all over the places where these little girls are offered something and promised a job and they're taken into that. So what's going on in your heart?

Betty: Well, if I didn't know we could make a difference and prevent this from happening in so many different situations you couldn't stand to watch it. I couldn't stand to know that there was a little child like this woman was, she was abused, and she was probably tortured some. She was probably threatened all the time. She didn't see any hope anywhere. But now we know, we can offer that hope that can only be offered by Jesus. We can be the ones to express that love to her.

James: I want to show everybody while you're talking what happened. Now you need to see this. We have to block the faces of the little ones that she's helping. She's been set free. Here she is helping two young ones that we've set free, that had also been taken

captive. Now then she is like the mother to them because your love enabled us to rescue her -- not only rescue her but train her now where she is a part of the rescue.

Because see, what we've learned to do is to find these children where the predators are going in to deceive their families and head them off. We get in ahead of the deception. We're able to get these children in true safety and true opportunity. And oftentimes, when they first get them we're able to -- we have even because of your love been able to get secure areas where they can't come and get them.

Now when things happen, we can no longer show the hundreds of children's faces where they are singing praises, they're learning English, they're learning to teach. Many of them grow up to be professors, teachers, and leaders in their community. This is happening all over the world -- this beautiful process. But the children when we're growing them and they're in the safe house or the House of Destiny, we can't show their faces anymore because if they're recognized and anybody sees them, they'll deliberately go and capture them again. So we are continually working. Many of the shots you see now are secret cameras to show you what's going on. But you are setting them free. The love of God through our viewers.

Here's what I want to ask you to do. Think about this. An average of \$128 we can set somebody free and give them a new start and a new future. We can literally find them, we rescue them, we reach and rescue them, and we begin to restore their life -- \$128. Now here's what's happening. Think about this. I always try, I tell you I want you to think as big as possible. \$1280 and we're going to rescue ten. Think about that. But all of this is going to be doubled.

Now listen to what I'm saying. We have a \$320,000 matching gift. You say where did that come from? People who watched it like you and said, I've got to help stop that. I have got to. And they gave a matching gift together, a group of our friends to match what you give. Which means \$1280 will now rescue 20. It means \$128 will rescue two.

So would you please, would you go get your bankcard? Would you go online or dial that number that's there as a prayer line? Right now people are praying. Many, many people know somebody is loving them right now, holding their broken heart. Would you call that line and say it is a help line, here's my gift? Could you give \$1280? If you can, I believe you will. It will be doubled. Or \$128, it will rescue two. \$64, it will be doubled to reach one. Whatever you can do.

We have some gifts to send you that I promise you will bless you but you're giving the greatest gift, you're giving people freedom and a chance at life. Thank you so much for doing it. Thanks for making that gift.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Behind the bright lights there's a darkness where a world of innocence is lost, and abuse runs rampant scarring the souls of children with no one and nowhere to turn for help. With bodies broken and hopes crushed, these young victims are trapped in a never-ending nightmare.

Today you can shine the light of God's love in this dark world to reach, rescue, and restore these young ones to the life God designed for them to live. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 Mission Rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

And with your donation of any amount we'll send you the faith, hope, love tea towel set. These beautifully woven hand towels are a wonderful reminder to remain steadfast in faith, hope, and love each day.

With your gift of \$128 or more you'll receive the life-giving Proverbs journal bound in genuine leather. This journal is filled with wisdom and daily encouragement from Proverbs, featuring lined pages for your personal notes as you reflect on godly instruction

to success in life.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,280 which will now help rescue 20 children! And you may request our beautiful bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio:

James: I want to remind you, the \$320,000 matching gift, you realize that's a miracle of love? To support the one program that we thought we might show our viewers one time and they'd never even want to see another. You said to us, "We will set those precious children free from sexual trafficking." Your gift will immediately be matched and doubled. Please! Make the gift God puts on your heart.

You know the gifts we're sending you to say thank you. If you'd like to have Rebekah's book and you say, "You know what? I think that would really mean something in my life or somebody I love." We'll be glad to send it to you. You can get it on line or in the bookstores. But if you say, James, I going to help you set those precious ones free, would you mind sending me the book? We'll be glad to do it.

Would you join me and Betty saying thanks to Rebekah for being a blessing? We love you. Give our regards to your family, to Gabe. Thank all of you for watching. Thank you so much!