

3/2/20

Week 10: WFL last week

James and Betty Robison

Robert Jeffress

James: Well, you ought to be excited. And you ought to be clapping at home. I don't think we could bring two guests for the week, and you'll also be hearing Sheila, but the guests that Betty and I are going to be talking to, two great church leaders, great shepherds, and using the word in the truest, purest sense in relationship to the shepherd Jesus because boy, they've got his heart. Pastors, Dr. Robert Jeffress has been here a lot. I want to tell you, every time he comes, you talk about a grand slam, he hits it for Jesus. And I'm just thrilled he's here. First Baptist church in Dallas. He's got a book that's out now. It's called *Courageous*: Ten strategies for thriving, overcoming victory, conquering, in a hostile world. *Courageous*! Absolutely essential.

Would you join me and Betty in welcoming one of the men we respect and appreciate so much right here from the DFW area, First Baptist Church pastor, Dr. Robert Jeffress? Give him a great welcome.

Robert: Thank you, James! Thank you, Betty! Great to see you.

James: There's a lot going on that's disturbing, if you're not close to God could be distressing and depressing, but disheartening. But what you look at today, would you say that there's a real strong call for courageous people who believe the truth to stand not just say in declaration or defense of the truth but in a demonstration of it? And would a demonstration of the power of that truth be courage?

Robert: Absolutely! C.S. Lewis described this world as enemy occupied territory. That's

really where we're living. I think it is increasingly hard to live out your faith in this world because face it, when we're on the battleground we're getting incoming from three different directions. We're being attacked from without; a hostile culture that is opposed to the things of God. Not just the culture is coming at us, just life circumstances. I think about what you all went through in losing Robin and she is in heaven now. Everybody faces outward attacks that are a challenge to their faith.

We have attacks from within. We don't talk about it much, but we still have this old sin nature we drag around with us and the Bible says the desires of the flesh are at war with the desires of the spirit.

And then if that weren't enough, attacks from without and from within, we have attacks from below. We have an adversary, the devil who has a battle plan for our destruction. That's why I say it's hard to live out our faith.

So what I've done in this book, *Courageous* is I've taken the survival tactics that people tell us you need if you're in a plane crash or an avalanche or a tornado. Things like don't panic! Or gain situational awareness. Or trust your training. I've taken each of those survival principles and used the Bible to illustrate them and show how we can live out our faith, not just surviving but actually thriving.

James: Wow! Well, you just touched the first don't panic. Do you want to elaborate on that anymore? Because that's the sum total of the chapter.

Robert: I start out each chapter with a true survival story of somebody in an earthquake or somebody in a plane crash and how they illustrated that principle. I start out with a well-known person who was in a plane crash. When people are in a plane crash and they survive, 10% flee, 10% fight, and the other 80% freeze in place. We have to be careful when we are bombarded, maybe with a negative report from the doctor, or a boss who threatens to fire us if we stand up for our faith, if we're a wife married to a non-Christian, we need to not panic.

God told Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you are." And I talk about in this chapter, don't panic. What God told Joshua, he said, "You can trust in my promises, you can trust in my commands, and you can trust in my presence." So we talk about how to keep from panicking.

James: And we have all of that if we would just recognize the reality of this living Jesus actually living in us. You say take inventory. What are you referencing?

Robert: The survival story I tell in that chapter is from Apollo 13. Do you remember the story a few years ago? Ron Howard made an award-winning movie out of it? But remember, they found themselves in a terrible situation. Carbon dioxide in the cabin was rising; they had run out of filters. So all they could use is what they had on board. And they had to use two socks, some plastic bags, duct tape and a bungee cord to form an air filter that would get them back home.

And in the same way even in a threatening situation, we need to take inventory of what God has given us but he's given us a lot more than a bungee cord and duct tape. He's given us two things. He's given us the armor of God and we talk about Ephesians six, the sword of the spirit, the breastplate of righteousness. We know those things. But that's not the only resource. When we're going through a difficult situation God has given us the people of God, other Christians that we can rely on. Solomon said, "Two are better than one. And a cord of three strands is not easily broken."

I have found and maybe you all have seen this, that when we're being assaulted and challenged, Satan loves to do three things. He likes to divide us from other Christians. Then he isolates us where we're all alone and then he attacks us. One thing I appreciate about you all's ministry is you talk about uniting Christians, bringing Christians together. There's strength in numbers. God never meant us to try to live our lives alone or even just with him. He's given us other believers to bind ourselves together with who get us through those challenging times when we need courage.

James: We've walked together trying to encourage leaders to come together and it's been a remarkable thing. You talk about the strength of the three to make up the strength in that cord. We've watched church leaders come together, and I'm actually, Jentezen Franklin is going to be our guest in the next program, and then I'm going to talk to the two of you. And we've come together to encourage leaders to actually become one in Christ, which doesn't mean sameness, but it means unity which is far from sameness. It is the beauty of unity with great diversity that becomes an appreciated fact or characteristic rather than a point at which we differ or divide.

And we are really watching a miracle. Do you see in these leaders that we're getting together, do you see courage rising up in the very fact that they're standing there loving one another and encouraging the body? Are you even encouraged by what you see in that area?

Robert: I am encouraged. I think there is a great work of God going on. And I know we'll get into this in that program but I do see other Christians not exhibiting courage. They're more concerned with what other people think than with what God thinks. You know, I'm grateful for what's happening in our country and the push for religious liberty. But I was reading a columnist this week who said, "There is one thing government cannot give us and that is courage." Every Christian has to be willing to exhibit courage, and to realize it is going to be difficult to live as a Christian right now.

Jesus said, "In this world you will have tribulation." He didn't sugar coat things. He didn't say everything is going to turn out all right in the short term. He said, "You're going to have tribulation." But then he said, "But be of good cheer," or he actually said, "Take courage for I have overcome the world."

So I think that's the one thing Christians need more than anything right now is the courage to say I don't care what man does to me, I don't care what circumstances do to me, I'm going to live to please the Lord the few years I'm on this earth.

Betty: I think too, just knowing that we have the body of Christ, we're part of that and we have them with us, when we feel down and out. But the most important thing is God says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." That should be encouragement to us to have the courage to step forward and encourage one another. Because I notice that when I encourage someone else, I feel that courage rising up in me to be bold and not to be ashamed of God and what's he's done in our lives and to speak out.

Robert: I hear this all the time. Members of my church are going through a difficult time. They lose a loved one, perhaps, a child or a parent or a mate and they say, "I don't know how anybody makes it who doesn't have a church or a group of believers to strengthen them and encourage them." Well, the answer is they don't make it. They don't make it! God never meant us to live our Christian lives in isolation.

Sometimes you hear people say, "Well, we're going through a difficult time. We're going to take a sabbatical from church and take some time off." Our friend, David Jeremiah says there is only one person who thinks you ought to quit going to church when you're suffering problems and that's the devil. You don't want to listen to him!"

[Laughter]

James: David has just been with us. He is a joy. Acts 4:31, I wrote a book called, *Living Amazed*, and if I had to kind of sum it up in a single package to live amazed, you know when they prayed together the place was shaken where they met and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. Would you characterize that term *boldness* as courageous acts?

Robert: Absolutely! Boldness, courage means obeying God regardless of the circumstances. One of the stories I tell in this book, in my own life, I realized early on it was going to cost something to serve Jesus Christ. I was in high school. I went to Richardson High School, a 3,000 student-body school and I was the student council

president. So I was going to deliver the prayer at the opening football game in September for that year. We were playing a church that had a large Jewish population. I was told not to use the phrase "in Jesus' name" when I prayed, not to insult anybody. I was told that if I did, I would have to step down as the student council president.

And so for a moment I thought, now do I want to give up my influence, blah-blah-blah-blah? And I stopped myself and I said, you know Robert, you've given your life to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if you compromise now, you're going to spend your whole life compromising. So I stood up and in the loudest voice I could say said, "And in Jesus' name, the King of kings and the Lord of lords we pray! Amen!" And I didn't lose my position either.

James: I bet you didn't.

Robert: But it is going to cost something. Somewhere along the line it is going to cost something. But you know, I say in this book, the subtitle is, "Ten strategies for thriving" -- not surviving! God wants us to do more than just survive. He wants us to thrive. You know my old professor, Howard Hendricks, he's in heaven right now, he said so many Christians walk around with a sour expression on their face. They would make good cover photos for the book of Lamentations. You know what I mean? They're just so miserable! And we get this idea, oh I'm just going to try to creep and crawl through this life. It is like we're going across the finish line on our knees just trying to make it over there.

That's not what Jesus said. That's not what Jesus did. Remember Hebrews 12? "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, who for the joy set before him endured the cross." Jesus went triumphantly, joyfully, with courage to the cross because he knew what awaited him. And that's how God wants us to live. He wants us to live courageously and with joy. That's what I talk about in this book, how to do that.

James: I just can't imagine anybody coming to your church, doc!

[Laughter]

How to develop the victory not the victim mind-set. You probably touched on that a little bit. Can you expand on it?

Robert: Yeah. If you're in a threatening situation and you start to think of yourself as a victim, you're doomed to failure. I think about what Chuck Swindoll said one time. He said, "The longer I live, the more I'm convinced that life is 10% what happens to you, and 90% your response to what happens to you."

James: Wow! Boy, that's strong! It's strong!

Robert: We can't control our circumstances, but we can control our response. I used the story of Joseph in that chapter. Think about what happened to him -- sold into slavery by his brothers, accused of rape by his boss's wife, forgotten by his friends in prison. All of this but then God used him, put him in Egypt. Remember when he saw his brothers what he said? "You meant it for evil but God meant it for good." That's a victor's mind-set to realize there's no circumstance in my life that God doesn't allow. Somebody said it this way, "There is nothing that can happen to a child of God that does not first of all pass through the love of God, the will of God and the power of God. And if it's come that far, it's come for some great purpose in my life." That's a victor's mind-set.

James: It really is. You can just shrink it down, all things are not good, but God works all things together for good to accomplish his purpose, which I believe is revealing the kingdom reality and the king's presence. But it says that we are through all the pressure, everything that happens, to be shaped into the image of Jesus. And boy, that is the pressure that is in life -- the pressure that comes. But what does it do? Shapes us in Jesus. I believe that fills us with courage.

Robert: I know you all well enough to know, I've seen you change through the years,

James. You've watched me change, I've watched you change. But I realize how God has shaped you into his image. And wouldn't you agree? It's not the easy times in life that make us more like Christ. It's the difficult times.

Hebrews 5:8, I don't understand that verse at all. It is my first verse to ask God about, but it says about Jesus, "Though he was a son he learned obedience by the things that he suffered." How could Jesus learn obedience? But he did! And it was by the things he suffered. If God's plan for his own son included suffering, hardship, challenges, why are we so surprised when we go through them as if something is not right here, God has forgotten us if that was his plan for his own son. You're right! All things work together for good but the good isn't a full bank account or a healthy life or even happy children or a mate. The good is that next verse, "being conformed to the image of Christ."

James: Do y'all appreciate Dr. Jeffress? Betty and I do. *LIFE Today* does. *LIFE Outreach* does. To all of you at First Baptist Church, I sowed a lot of seeds in your church starting when I was 23 years old. And boy, Dr. Criswell and I had a wonderful relationship. Then I've loved your pastors. And this one, to even think that maybe I threw a few seeds in the fertile soil of your life, Robert Jeffress. And you are a continual encouragement. One of the great joys I have is calling you sometime when people are just saying all kind of things about you to speak into your life the love of God, and to realize what doing he's through you and to thank you for simply being willing to say courageously what he puts on your heart.

Would you say thank you Dr. Jeffress for your courage? Thank you for standing. The book is in the bookstores but I'm going to tell you this. Now listen. We're in the last week asking your help to drill water wells. You really determine how many we can drill. They cost \$4800 each. That's a huge amount but a lot of people say it is one of the greatest joys of our year. We do that. Couples do it. Individuals do it. Sometimes a business will do it. Somebody will go and talk to their friends about it. But most of the support comes with gifts of \$48. That gives ten people water the rest of their life.

Here's what I want you to understand. We really do need to hear from you right now because you will determine whether or not the places the missionaries point out, there is water here. Bore holes reveal it but they're filthy, contaminated. We know there is water. Please give us a well. One that is sealed and safe. One that doesn't depend upon electrical power plants that are unreliable all over Africa, especially in the small villages and areas. Give us a manual pump. That's what we do.

Well, we're going to send Sheila Walsh's book to say thank you for any gift. \$48, remember, ten people water the rest of their life. \$144, 30 people the water the rest of their life. A miracle! Can you give a well or part of a well? We'll also send you Dr. Jeffress's book on courage. And believe me, you're going to be expressing compassion too even as you help us share Water for LIFE while pointing people to the water of life. Watch closely. I think you're going to want to be a miracle that is desperately needed.

On the mission field:

Sheila: In the driest regions of Africa, there is often only one place to find water, deep underground. So deep in fact that it takes two people a full week of digging to reach it. Well, despite their efforts these hand-dug wells aren't deep enough, and the water remains unclean causing widespread illness from waterborne diseases. Recently, we learned of another danger we did not expect.

Open Captions:

>> My daughter went to the hole to get water. She was gone too long, and we began to worry. I went to check on her but only found her bucket. When I looked further down into the hole, I saw my daughter. She had fallen in and drowned.

Sheila: It's an unimaginable tragedy. A mother's worst nightmare! And yet the reality surrounding Merci and her family, the utter lack of safe water sources demands that they live with the risk.

Open Captions:

>> I feel so much pain when I think about what happened to her. It's crippling. And I have so much fear for my other children. If I send them to draw water, will the same thing happen to them?

Sheila: I don't want one more mother to go through what Merci has gone through. But this is something you and I can do something about. This did not need to happen. And that's why we're here. She's not asking for a lot. She's just looking for a place to send her children to actually get for the first time in their lives clean water.

End of video**In the studio:**

James: Boy, I wish I could just put my hands on your sweet cheeks, Merci and tell you we love you. And Sheila, I want to thank you for sitting by Merci and shedding such beautiful mercy on her by your love and your compassion. And all of the viewers, Betty, they are the mercy drops that fall from heaven in the form of water.

This is the last week now in this emphasis to raise the funds for the wells this year. Would you drill one? Let me just ask you this, honey. We tried, we've asked God to let us drill a well and every time that the mission calls for it, could we just say to Merci that you and I will pay for that well?

Betty: Absolutely! I wouldn't have it any other way.

James: And we can.

Betty: We can. And all of us can do something. We can do a part. Do you realize I can pick up this cup of water and drink it without worrying that it has disease in it? I don't even give it a thought. But every time that mother goes or sends her children down to

bring up that water, not only the risk that they fall in like her daughter did but also the risk of drinking that diseased water. Every time her children take a sip of that water, her heart must break because she said they have to have the water. Let's give her a choice. Let's let her give fresh drinking water to her children. Please join with us and let's do that.

James: Let's take her as an example representing mothers all over Africa in the hundreds of villages where, with your help, we'll give them an expression of mercy and we'll give them Water for LIFE because of the water of life. Boy, you can rest assured, those missionaries show the love of Jesus just like Sheila did. She is so excited being here with *LIFE Outreach* and the outreaches of *LIFE* that your love, God's love through you makes possible.

Would you be a miracle of mercy right now? Could you drill a well? Like Betty and I've just said we will and we ask God to let us be able to do that. Perhaps some of you have been praying that. This may be the time. Or maybe you just do it and say, "I'm going to trust God for a miracle. And I want to be a miracle in that village." Could you give \$48? Could you do that and give ten people water the rest of their life? What a great place to put \$48. \$144, 30 people. There's a level at which all of us can participate.

Think about this, some people say, "I wish I could give a well. I can do pretty good, but I can't do that." Could you give \$1200 and then say, "God, raise up three more to join me." Or \$2400 and pray for one other. You come with the gift God put on your heart to give him love and in fact, you're giving mercy. You really are. You're giving the greatest gift, you're giving life. I mentioned the book that we're going to share with you by Sheila, one by Dr. Jeffress. Would you please right now go online or go to the phone, get your bankcard, use it like a check. If you want to mail a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us it's in the mail. We need to know so we can send the drilling rigs to the various villages knowing the resources, your support is there. Thank you so much for doing it!

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 is the answer to a mother's prayer to save the lives of her children, to offer them a bright future free from the fear of death. With your gift today you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year.

Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten people. \$72 will provide for 15. \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift we'll send you *Praying Women*: "How to pray when you don't know what to say." In her new book, Sheila Walsh shows you how to reignite your conversation with God to become a strong praying woman.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "*Power of Prayer*" bundle. This bundle includes a cozy throw blanket adorned with words of The Lord's Prayer, a decorative pillow cover, as well as Sheila's book. All three are encouraging reminders of how there's power in your faith-filled prayers!

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 our brand-new commemorative bronze sculpture, "A Mother's Strength."

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

End of video

On the mission field

Betty: I'm standing here with these children and they're just a small example of children all over the world that deserve to be considered and loved and cared for. We have an opportunity to do that right now among these children and those around the world; to give them some clean water and give them a chance in life.

I ask you to help us do that. It's just a simple request but a very urgent and important one. Please join with us. You'll get such great joy out of it – I know you will! God bless you and thank you!

In the studio

James: Let me just say in behalf of the precious people you're going to give hope to, Merci, what a name she has. Let's show it to her. Dr. Jeffress's book, I mentioned this, you talk about awesome gifts. You say, "I want both those books, and I'm giving water, I'm making a gift of life through fresh clean water." Remember, last week! We really need to hear from you so we can pour mercy out.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Dr. Robert Jeffress?

Robert: Thank you all so much.

James: You're going to be back with another great pastor, Jentezen Franklin. Thanks for watching! God bless you.