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Week 11: Rescue Life

James and Betty Robison

Jay and Katherine Wolf

James: This is a great, great audience. You're a great audience. You say, oh you don't want to see me right now. Well, I don't know where you are, what time of day it is where you're watching but we want to thank you for watching. You're going to be glad you did.

I'm James Robison. My wife Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. This is an awesome couple. The name of this book, *Suffer Strong*. Louie and Shelly Giglio wrote this. Louie, we love you. Boy, you did great here recently with Sheila and with our son, Randy. Boy, that fabulous event on New Year's Eve in the Mercedes stadium, 65,000 young people -- to God be the glory. We love you, Louie.

Katherine: You're saying they wrote the forward. That's really cool they wrote the forward.

James: You know this girl is quick right here. They wrote the forward and an endorsement. So I apologize. Forward by -- not book by! This is written by this couple. Sorry, Louie! You just lost a book there, buddy! He's telling everybody how great this book is. Louie, I just want to thank you because you're a tremendous blessing. You really hit it out of the park here and everywhere you go.

Well, Katherine and Jay Wolf are our guests and they've been here before a couple of times. I want them to come back every time they want to. Would you welcome Katherine and Jay Wolf to *LIFE Today*?

[Cheers & Applause]

James: Now you rode in here in a motorized wheelchair and that's the way you've been coming. I walk into eat dinner with you earlier tonight before we taped and you're standing there at the table going down the row here and I'm thinking what is this?

Katherine: Yes! No, I can stand. You want to see? I can stand.

James: You can? All right. Let's see this. Is that progress?

Katherine: Well, in some ways for sure to be able to balance.

Jay: Don't fall over now!

Katherine: I don't need help.

[Laughter]

I can stand. I can kind of hobble around but I can't really walk. However it's kind of a big deal because half my brain, half of the cerebellum part of my brain is missing. So I have no sense of balance.

James: And that was a stroke.

Katherine: For sure. Yeah, I had a massive brainstem stroke caused by an AVM that I didn't know I had when I was 26.

James: You are a blessing.

Katherine: Oh, thank you!

James: And he's a blessing.

Katherine: I agree!

James: When you knew you were in this trouble did you wonder if he would handle it, could handle it or did you just know he would?

Katherine: I knew he would actually. Yeah. Jay's a good man -- and from good stock that I should say that I've loved her a long time too. His dad is a Baptist pastor in Montgomery, Alabama and just one of the more Christ-like people I've ever known. Yeah, Jay has, just as I have, walked with the Lord, never remotely perfectly, but our whole lives. And when you've got so much good Jesus stuff marinating in you, when suffering comes it just kind of comes out. You know? When your whole life has been about Jesus, you kind of, there is nowhere else to look when you're at rock bottom but straight up.

James: I have never heard "marinated with Jesus" as the love of God and all. That is good.

Jay: It's like a barbecue metaphor, I think. Texas.

James: It soaks you through and through. I told you when you were here before, I know the last time that I'm every bit as impressed with the miracle in you as I am with Katherine.

Okay, *Suffer Strong*. Okay let's just cut to the chase. When it happened did you understand the importance of suffering strong? Or is this something you've learned on the journey? Paul said he could abound and be abased but he still knew that he had lost his life in Christ and for Christ to live in him was to live -- it was everything to him. When did you learn that suffering strong is actually a part of the, say, the Christian journey that a lot of people need to learn?

Jay: The stroke happened 12 years ago on an ordinary day; with no warning everything was upended in our life. All the dreams we thought were just ahead of us, we had a six-month old baby, all of that, was hanging by a thread, and this is the reality of the world we all live in. I think for both of us, we had this foundation of Jesus in us that we didn't choose even. It was given to us. And then we got to choose it when we sit at this crossroads of suffering.

James: What was your line of work at that time?

Jay: I was in law school. Pepperdine -- Pepperdine Law School in L.A. had brought us out to California. It was a couple of weeks before I was to graduate. So there was, the timing was really pretty providential because in that season I was able to enter in and step alongside of Katherine and walk through this hell with her so she would know she wasn't alone. And I think in that process we began to understand this opportunity we have to *Suffer Strong* that it's not...

James: Did it upend your going ahead and graduating or did you manage to go back and do it?

Jay: Yeah, I ended up... it was a total God thing, graduating, basically. And then I took the bar a few years later and passed it. But the past 12 years of our life we've summed up all that we've learned in this message that it's not all hard or all good but it's both in this side of heaven. And that the life of Christ shows us that we can hold those two together, that we can hold the joy and the sorrow. That we don't have to hate our life just because it's not what we thought it was going to be. We can see this life right in front of us that God has allowed and given us, and at a certain point come to even cherish it and champion it because it's a gift from him.

Now we never imagined this would be our life. We never imagined some of the struggles that have nothing to do with the wheelchair or the stroke or any of that yet that's all of us. This book isn't just for somebody who is dealing with disability or stroke or medical

catastrophe. All of us are dealing with this chasm between our actual life and the life that we dreamed when we were little. And to bring those together to say that there is a redefining of our lives and upending in this upside down kingdom but that is leading us toward a refined life through Christ. This is how we *Suffer Strong*.

This is the message we feel God has given us and called us to talk about to the church and outside of the church. To say that suffering isn't the end of the story, it is a new beginning.

James: Do you gain the strength by knowing where the ultimate shaping process of suffering takes you?

Jay: Absolutely. I remember sitting in the I.C.U. as Katherine was on a million machines. She was on life support for 40 days. They had scraped her brainstem, removed part of her brain. They didn't know if she'd ever wake up. I remember reading through Job because where else do you go in the midst of something like that besides Job? And reading in Chapter 5 that his hands wound but they heal. He has allowed something, we don't get why but he is going to be the avenue of the healing also.

And we've got to lean into that and seek him and try not to just think we have all the ending figured out. But one day at a time, together, and with our community, hoping for us and uplifting us like the church is supposed to do, we found the courage to keep leaning in to this life that we didn't ever think we'd be living. And we're a good team, I think all these years together.

James: How do you want people to grasp suffering strong, Katherine? How would you sum it up if you could say in simple terms I want you to get this?

Katherine: Well, the simple terms are always hard for me; concise is hard for me. I think the core of this message, so book one, *Hope Heals* was like our memoir of what happened to us. This book *Suffer Strong* is almost lessons learned from the stroke and

really the disability. I cannot drive a car for instance. I've gone on to have a second baby but I'm mothering from a wheelchair.

Our life is very unique. And yet, what we really see in our story that is so universal in everyone's story is what we have done, and it is not us, it is Christ in us that's enabled this, is gone with it. Instead of saying this is like this huge diversion and this detour and this crazy thing that's going to wreck our lives, we've seen this as okay, wasn't what we thought life was going to look like but this is exactly what God had for our story and we're going to live it well for him. Even if it is not the life we thought about when we were a little girl and a little boy.

And honestly, our world would be different if people lived that way. If they woke up to the life right in front of you that you are living is the new dream. The dream you had when you were five years old is no longer the dream. This is it and you're going to go with it. That is what suffering strong is all about. They say that life is not nearly as much about what happens to you as how you respond to what happens to you. And as a believer, I think it is about how you think about what happens to you, how you remember what happens to you, how you recognize what God is doing in your story -- how you see the traces of his hand in all of that and how he is at work in it. That is your answer.

Betty: Like you said earlier, it's not just the physical things that might happen to you, the disadvantages there, the tragedies, it is other things in life. We lost a daughter. It wasn't something we planned. But I can relate to what you say about suffering strong because I never knew until this happened, I would not have understood what you were saying.

But suffering strong -- we don't get over it, we walk through it and God walks through it with us. And I have grown in my relationship with him that I might never have experienced to the degree that I've experienced it had we not suffered that loss. And yes, we miss her every day but God is good every day. And it gets better and better.

James: Yeah, he'll walk through the valley of every shadow, including the shadow of death, the shadow of suffering and pain. You have an exuberance that is a joy that even the minute we walked in the room with you tonight, and every time we've been around you, there is something coming out that's a whole lot bigger than her. It is bigger than a person that's an Olympic athlete.

Katherine: Well, thanks!

James: It is God in her. Your face is a reflection of the glory of God. Both of you! I mean yours is kind of turned a little bit.

Katherine: Yeah, my face doesn't move on one side, but I am -- you can laugh. I know that's awkward but it's true. [Laughing] But here's the thing. I call myself a lie disrupter because I think we're all buying into the lie and worshipping at the idol of a pain-free life. So I'm disrupting that lie. Simultaneously, I'm a joy rebel. I'm rebelling with joy.

James: I love it! She's a hoot; isn't she?

Jay: Not boring.

James: Okay. We want everybody to get this book. This book is just phenomenal to help. Do you all have a website where people could communicate with you? Are you doing something they can help you do?

Katherine: All the things -- all the things. You tell them.

Jay: Sure. They can go on to SufferStrong.com, learn more about the book. But we have a ministry, we've been in ministry full time for seven years, both of us.

James: So you go together to speak in different...

Jay: We speak, and we do...

Katherine: We do it all.

James: Events or churches or whatever? Somebody is having a convention and they want to be encouraged.

Jay: What is kind of neat is with the disability which looks like a limitation, that has opened the doors to all kinds of different places outside of the church even, where we get to share about our hope and what's kept us going. So we pretty much, have story will travel, wherever God leads us.

But the really cool thing is that again, this wheelchair was the thing we wanted Katherine to get out of and we prayed and over time we've realized this was her seat of honor. And that this was the very avenue, she wasn't wheelchair bound, she was wheelchair free and this is what God does with our own limitations. And so we've had our eyes opened just to the special needs world. It was not a community that we were a part of that we thought a lot about and we realize after we heard some of the stats, it is the largest minority in the world, and in the U.S., according to the U.N. and it is the most unchurched people group.

So we looked around. We were speaking at a camp for families with disabilities and we realize we're the speakers but these are our people. And now that we know, we can't unknow. We can't unsee what we've seen and now we're an advocate. We're going to be a voice. We're going to get this wheelchair on every stage we can to say we're with you. We want to uplift this community. The body of Christ is missing something if it is missing people with disabilities because it is not in its fullness unless everybody who wants has a seat at the table.

James: So if they want you to come and share, go to your website, they know how to see the information about where they want you to go.

Jay: We have a camp called Hope Heals Camp that we have run the past three years.

James: Is that once a year or what?

Katherine: Everyone in America should come to volunteer to work at. It's awesome!

Jay: We do need volunteers. So it is for families, whole family systems. We've even got some people here tonight in our audience who have come to be a part of it. To heal, and to find rest, and to find resources, and to find each other, and to find God in the midst of their stories. And then to go back to their communities and be empowered to go share.

James: So if they go to the website they can find out how they might effectively help you be effective with what you're doing.

Jay: Be a volunteer, help fund it.

James: And also though, if they wanted to invite you to come for some convention or church or whatever for some event, you're able to do that.

Katherine: Yeah! Like all the things – receiving Academy Awards...

James: Do you have, say an event cost for you to be able to do it?

Jay: Yeah, we make it where if we feel God's called us to it. But yeah, we've been doing it full time.

James: I don't care how they do it, I hope that wherever they come, they leave wrapped up in your love and your prayers. But I also pray you'd send them out with a gift of love that's also financial supporting everything God put on their heart. Because what he's put on their heart to help us understand how to *Suffer Strong* is actually helping us understand with a gratitude to God for even the grace to *Suffer Strong* but understanding

the purpose of that is to shape Christ in us. He works all things together for good. The ultimate in that passage, to conform us into the image of Jesus -- Jesus in us. The same Jesus in us, now we want to be shaped for he shines forth as he does in this couple.

Do you agree Jesus is manifested in this couple, both the husband and the wife? We see Jesus in you. Betty and I want that for us as a couple and you have been...

Katherine: Would you like a moment of Romans eight passage that. ..

James: Go for it!

Katherine: And we know in all things God works for good for those who love him who have been called according to his purposes. And as God predestined, he also called. Those he called, he also justified. Those he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also graciously give us all things? Who is he that brings any charge against those who God has chosen? It is God who justifies. It was he that died -- wait! ...died, Christ Jesus and he rose again from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

I think that's all I can remember.

James: That sounds like Jesus and God to me.

Katherine: Who can separate us from the love of God? Can trouble or hardship or persecution, or famine or nakedness or danger of the sword? No! In all these things we are more than conquerors. So I'm convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor demons, nor the past nor the present nor any powers, nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus.

James: Amen! High five!

Katherine: I love that passage.

James: You've got to get this. You've got to get the book. We love you. I'm telling you, Katherine, you and Jay.

And we love all of you. You know what you do? You help us pour God's love all over the world, over some of the most forgotten people on the planet who are trafficked, in bondage. You're going to see some real miracle workers. You talk about people dressed in a way that you can tell, what's going on here? Above all they're dressed in the love of Jesus and they're rescuing people, children about to be trafficked, many times getting them out of the trafficking situation with great courage and compassion. Watch closely because you are, I'm telling you, God in you, is a key to all of it. Watch!

On the mission field:

Announcer: They wage war in plain sight. Not with weapons of steel but of heart and mind. Always watching, seeing what was meant to be hidden. Fearlessly, they confront the danger, skillfully unraveling the strategy of the enemy. Reclaiming that which was stolen and leaving the thief empty-handed. These are heroes and their brand of rescue is not pulling girls out of hell but sparing them from it altogether.

We call them "border monitors." But to the thousands of women and children they have saved they're known as "guardian angels." Their mission is simple: Prevention through interception. With well-trained eyes they scan the steady flow of humanity pouring through these borders identifying anything that even hints at a potential trafficking in progress.

With unbelievable courage and wisdom they intervene refusing to let evil have its way. They know what to ask to uncover the truth and won't hesitate to right what is wrong. They literally stand in the gap between freedom and slavery.

Today, our mission partners in Nepal have teams in place at three of the country's largest entry points rescuing an average of 90 women and children every single month. Their success is astonishing. But our hearts are still troubled by the remaining unmonitored areas being used to traffic victims throughout Asia and beyond. Imagine how many more lives could be saved if we were able to expand our efforts. Our ability to empower more of these heroes here is dependent upon the support of our Rescue Life heroes back home. Heroes like you.

End of video

In the studio:

James: That's you! That is absolutely you. Everyone watching. Betty and I joyfully do our part; our team going there in these areas. When we first went to Thailand, the sex capital of the world. To think that we were going to work with two people who ran Hollywood's biggest generators for their biggest production, sold everything. They had watched us on television. Their hearts were moved. They had been inspired by the mission love. They go and plant their lives there and began renting quarters to get these girls and children that they could find, before they got trafficked or after they were trafficked, taking care of them.

And we with your help joined together to build the House of Destiny -- Destiny House! Where literally thousands and thousands of children have been rescued. And then other ministries branched off of that, even in the area that you supported.

Right now what you're seeing on the border of Nepal with these children being taken into India and exploited and trafficked, we're actually supporting those who are rescuing them. And boy, you talk about discernment and sensitivity, they're able to head them off. Because see, many times these children, and even their parents have been convinced, send your child with this person or these individuals, they're going to take them and take care of them. Oh no they don't! They take them and use them and sell them. And these people have the discernment of the spirit of God and the love of God and courage -- it

takes tremendous courage to be out there literally interrupting the flow of millions and billions of dollars overall worldwide. When you interrupt that flow you're in danger. But they're dressed up in the great glory and protection of Almighty God and our prayers. But it is all made possible because of the support of our viewers.

Every single mission project that we're involved in was birthed in the heart of the missionaries and the workers like you see. The anointing and gifting of God is on them and they've yielded their life to do it fearlessly, faithfully. But they cannot do it, and this is what the missionaries made clear to us, could you possibly go back and keep us here effective; not only keep them there but we have with your help helped them expand to get God's arms around more people.

Would you right now help us reach, rescue, or restore hundreds -- hundreds of girls, children, those being trafficked. We have a wonderful group of friends who so believe in what we're doing that they have put up a quarter of a million dollars, \$250,000 matching gift to match what you give today. It costs \$128, that's the average, to start the rescue process. Now then it will be doubled. If you give \$128, it rescues two. Or you could give \$64 and you've rescued one. \$1280 will rescue ten, now it's 20.

Thank you for that love, God! But would you make that gift God puts on your heart? Would you right now go online, and would you dial that number, that prayer line and turn it into a life line? Go get your bankcard. Go online. Call the number. Use that card like a check. If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE* but do call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. We need to know your support's there. All these wonderful workers, all the people we're reaching out to, totally depends upon your support. We have some beautiful gifts to give you made by those who have been trafficked and you're going to like what they made for you with love. They're learning a trade. They're learning how to do something now to make a real legitimate meaningful living correctly, appropriately, because of God's love. Would you continue this outreach? Please, right now make the gift God put on your heart. Thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Behind the bright lights there is 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 \$250,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help *two* children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift we'll send you this beautiful "Freedom" bracelet handcrafted by survivors of human trafficking who want to say thank you for helping those still trapped. Wear it as a wonderful reminder to pray for the outreach.

With your gift of \$128 or more you'll receive the "Freedom" tote. This quality canvas tote bag is made by trafficked survivors who are now learning a new trade and includes spiritual life resources such as books, devotionals, CD's, or DVD's.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help rescue 20 children! And you may request our beautiful new bronze sculpture, "A Mother's Strength." Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio:

James: I'm telling you, it is exciting to me to know that beautiful little rescued hands made this bracelet. Betty has one on right here. And the reach and rescue and restore tote bag is really nice. I'm not kidding you. It's got extra pockets in it. This is a craft they're learning. This is a way to make a living.

Let me just say this to you. *Suffer Strong*, phenomenal truth -- transforming story. If you'd like to have this incredible book, we'll send it to you. You just help us rescue -- and I know that Jay and Katherine will say, boy, we'd like them to have our book. They're helping rescue people, set them free. We want to be a part of it. So we'll send you this book to say thank you. You already are.

Would you join Betty and me in thanking Katherine and Jay? For being the beautiful people you are dressed up in Jesus. Y'all come back any time that you have something you want to share. You've got an open door here.

Thank all of you for making *LIFE Today* possible. Thank you for sharing *LIFE Today*. God bless you!