

2/18/21

Week 8: WFL

James and Betty Robison

Samuel Rodriguez #2

BETTY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty and this is James, and we're so delighted to have one of our dearest friends, Sammy Rodriguez, with us today.

JAMES: I tell you what, buddy, we're brothers, we're family forever and ever and ever. I don't even know how old you are so don't tell us. But I'm definitely old enough to be your father. I don't know if I'm old enough to be your grandfather.

SAMUEL: You're actually my dad's age. Indeed!

JAMES: Anyway, you remember the time after you preached, think about this, it didn't even hit me until we were thinking about saying good-bye to our daughter eight years ago, right after Christmas. Did you know that we lost Robin just before our 50th anniversary, wedding? It just hit me. And you came a month after that for the 50th anniversary conference. You were as powerful a voice as we've ever heard in literally hundreds of conferences all over the nation. I was so moved that when you got through, I walked out and I said, "Drop down." And we dropped on our knees.

SAMUEL: The audience needs to know, this is live on stage at Gateway, our dear friend, Pastor Robert Morris. You said, "Drop!" I had no idea what was going on, so we dropped. And that image marked me.

JAMES: I laid over you and prayed that the anointing that was on me would be a double portion, and that everything God would put in you would be double. And that God would

use you to shake the world with his transforming truth. And he has. And that image is what launched several ministries when other people glimpsed it. You know that.

SAMUEL: It changed my life. I call you "Daddy James." You know that. I do that privately and publicly. It changed my life. It really has. Your love, you and Betty, you've been around the world, we honor you. I honor you. My family honors you. I alluded to this in our previous program. Somewhere down the road, whoever has the audacity or the courage or really the boredom to write a book about Sam Rodriguez, there has to be a chapter about your influence in my life. It truly marked me. Thank you for changing the world.

JAMES: Well, it's one life at a time, isn't it? Our viewers are the ones that get God's arms around...

SAMUEL: I need your audience to know, I know you haven't written about it but you will, they need to know that even though we're going to expose this this year, you're really Puerto Rican.

[LAUGHTER]

JAMES: I accept it! I absolutely accept it! *From Survive to Thrive*: "In the midst of pandemic and pressure, live a holy, healed, healthy, happy, humble, hungry, honoring life." We're going to do this, and I'm telling you upfront. Sometimes we kind of decide at the end of the program, we're going to send this to every one of you who ask for it as a gift to you because we believe it is that important at this moment.

But we're going to ask you to give a cup of water. Jesus says if you give just a cup of water in my name you won't lose your reward. Don't try to tell God what the reward is. Israel once thought they had a reward by needing a king like everyone else had. Bad deal! You don't tell God how to bless. You just do what God tells you to do and giving a cup of water is ministering not only to the thirsty but to Jesus because you're doing it for Jesus

when you touch the thirsty or the hungry. So those of you who will give a cup of water to a very thirsty, dying person in so many instances, we're going to send you the book.

Okay, Sammy, tell us why, I don't even know that we necessarily need to know all the whys you wrote it but what you believe will happen if people get the message you're trying to get across.

SAMUEL: The multigenerational impact is without question. The message that, the biblical narrative that compelled me to write this, we heard about my daughter's story, but the biblical narrative is Judges Chapter 6, the story of Gideon.

JAMES: Yeah, you go back online and look at that because she was raised up; it was like she was basically dying of COVID. It was past the point of hopeless. And she's young; she's just had a child, vulnerable. Read it or go back and watch it. Go online, *LIFE Today*, watch him the other day tell the story. Go ahead.

SAMUEL: We find Gideon in Judges chapter 6 doing something pretty interesting. He went from failing, surviving, to thriving, from Judges six, to Judges seven. Powerful narrative! We find Gideon, you're privy to the story. We find him threshing wheat at the bottom of a wine press. Let me repeat that. Threshing wheat at the bottom of a wine press. Not a threshing floor, a wine press. He was threshing wheat at the bottom of the pit.

Ladies and gentlemen, you don't thresh wheat in a pit. You need somewhere where wind has access to separate the wheat from the...

JAMES: Chaff.

SAMUEL: Absolutely! So no one threshes wheat in a pit. He was doing the right thing. He refused to let go of his harvest. The Mideonite marauders would come along and steal the harvest. The people of Israel were dying from starvation. And he continued to do the

right thing even though all the circumstances were against him. The angel of the Lord shows up and says, "Hey, Gideon! You are a mighty warrior." Another version says, "You're a hero." Wow! He never gave up on his harvest! How did he come out of the failure mode? By holding on, by continuing to thresh.

There are people in the audience right now, spiritually speaking, metaphorically speaking, you've been threshing that wheat. Even in the wrong season, during the COVID-19 pandemic, you continued to thresh wheat. Your family was falling apart. You continued to thresh wheat. You never gave up on the harvest. You never gave up on the purpose of God, on pursuing righteousness, on doing the will of God, adhering to the Word of God, being driven by the Spirit of God. And because you've never given up, even when others did give up, there is a promise in Galatians 6:9, "Do not grow weary of doing what is right. At the appointed time you will reap a harvest of blessings if you do not give up."

So how do you come out of failure mode? By holding onto your harvest. Continuing. And heaven invades your life, like he invaded my daughter's ICU room. He invades your life and he defines you. Not "you will be." The angel of the Lord didn't say, "Gideon, you will be one day." He says, "Let me tell you who you already are. You are a mighty warrior."

The guy's hiding in a pit threshing wheat. Are you kidding me? But God sees something beyond you. You're not defined by your circumstances. You're defined by his covenant. You're not defined by what surrounds you, you're defined by God's Spirit inside of you. And to all the religious folk, get over yourself. You're not even defined by "what you do for God." You're defined by what God already did for you.

So that's the power of coming out of failure mode. The moment you repudiate every vestige of identity moratorium, the moment you understand that Christ defines you, the vicarious, atoning work, the finished work on the cross defines you. The moment you realize that, you're no longer failing. So he comes out and he begins his surviving season.

In that surviving season, it's pretty amazing, it says he has a conversation with the angel of the Lord, he brings them back, an act of worship, which is broth, food. He touches the angel of the Lord with his staff. It gets on fire. It's Texas barbecue all over again. But then the Bible says the angel of the Lord disappears. Disappears!

What does Gideon do next? He looks up to heaven, has a conversation directly with God, with no longer the requirement of having to see the angel. What disappears from your life should not dictate your conversation of heaven. Your conversation with heaven is directly proportional to the faith that is in your heart, the confession and the repentance that activated a relationship with eternity that cannot and will not be denied.

So what you no longer have does not define you. You are not defined by what's missing. You're defined by a relationship with Jesus. That even though things are no longer around you, this conversation is sacred -- it is a sacred trust. And heaven says don't be afraid. You will not die. You will live to see the fulfillment of what of what I just told you. Pretty amazing! And that's how you come out of failure surviving.

I love this because Second Corinthians 5:7, "We walk by faith, not by sight." He started to walk now not by what he saw, the angel physically there, but by what he believed. What drives us? James and Betty, are we driven by what we see around us or what we believe? Let there be a generation that rises up driven by belief not by sight.

I see right now family members that are addicted to drugs, but I believe by the grace of God that they will be saved. See what I see does not necessarily dictate what I believe, if I believe it by faith through Christ.

This nation is falling apart. It's going to hell in a handbasket. We see that every single day on cable news. We see it! But I believe there is an awakening coming that will lead to a revival that will lead to cultural reformation where the kingdom of heaven will be advanced here on earth. God has the final word. It seems like this nation is going to hell.

America -- the nations right now, we're under utter darkness. But let not your heart be troubled. Don't drink the Kool-Aid! Because the most powerful spirit alive still on planet earth is the Holy Spirit of Almighty God!

JAMES: In his body, the church that the gates of hell and destruction, disease and division, dissension, and death do not prevail against. I have... you were talking about "I believe." I've reached a place that I believe has become "I know." I know that God intends us to walk over the tormentor. Isaiah said, "We will say to the tormentors, you will no longer say to us 'lie down' and we become a smooth road for you to walk on." Jesus said, "You will walk on the enemy like dust under your feet." Like a serpent and a scorpion, which you can crush with a single step.

We are to walk over the intention of the devil to destroy peace on earth and good will toward men, which he came to give, and he lives in us to give it. And the only way he gives it is through the body of Christ. Not just to somebody's, not just Sammy, and this preacher and that preacher, and this gifted one, but built up into the fullness of the stature of Christ, we walk over all the intentions of the enemy. That's God's will on earth. Excuse me!

By the way, when I was listening to you preach just now and I've just preached just a little burst right there. If you're not used to that, just simmer down. But here's the deal. I'm listening to you, and I prayed for a double portion on you like had been on me. I got to say, God, you put a triple portion. I'm sitting here listening to him, Betty and I'm saying, I know he's younger. Well, I was younger one time. I was younger than him one time. I've been young. I never could preach like you! No, don't tell me.

SAMUEL: I grew up watching you preach.

JAMES: Wait a minute, buddy, I'm telling you, God has done something in you. Get this book! Listen to this guy! Pray for this man because I'm telling you he has a double portion touch of God on him. He's not just here as he said to get the Hispanics to put

panic in the enemy, like getting them to stand up as his children. He is here to wake up the whole family of God into the fullness of the stature of Christ. And that is a whole lot of what God gave him at the midst of great pressure and great pain. Excuse me, Sam, I didn't mean to cut in. But you fired me up. But buddy, you are so anointed of God. It is glorious!

SAMUEL: I just want to push back even against the notion of a perpetual surviving church.

JAMES: I agree!

SAMUEL: There is no such thing as a whining church. For everyone's eschatology, "Oh Sam, James and Betty, y'all need to stop talking about conquering and walking upon the enemy because Jesus is coming." He is coming! But not for a defeated church. Not for a whiny church! Not for a moaning church. Not for a broken church or a divided church. He is coming back according to the Apostle Paul for a glorious church. A triumphant church!

JAMES: And His glory! Not a defeated church!

SAMUEL: A thriving church -- a thriving church! That's what Gideon did! So when Gideon came out... Gideon came out, and he came out of his failure mode. He came out of that wine press, the pit. Now he bypasses the bureaucracy, he confronts some things. He was whining about some things, so he was just surviving. The angel corrects him and tells him, "Stop it! Stop this. Knock it off!"

All of the sudden he enters into a thriving mode. He is no longer a victim. We can't be lifelong victims. It is counterintuitive to Romans eight. It is! We are more than conquerors -- more than conquerors.

JAMES: Overcomers!

SAMUEL: Romans 8:37, "All things work for good," Romans 8:28 but we are overcomers; right? Let me tell you what he does next, which is the thriving modality. Ready for this? He builds an altar. He just came out of a pit. Now he is building something. You're coming out of your pit not to be posting whining stories of... You're coming out of a pit to build and advance the kingdom of heaven here on earth. Build something! Build something!

Stop trying to fight when you should be building. Let him fight for you. God is not going to equip you for a fight that he never ordained for you to fight, for you to be participating. He anointed you to build, advance the kingdom. We are co-laborers, coworkers with Christ in the advancement. The building of his kingdom here on earth. So build! Build, build, build!

He built an altar he called his shalom. He said, "Peace -- the peace of God." And then, this is the part that got to me. Because we do great. Aren't we wonderful in building things? We do. We build ministries. We build beautiful churches. We build platforms until they get censored. We've built a number of things. But the next thing Gideon did was what really drove me. He not only built, he looked at what his father Joash had built which was a false altar to Baal. He said, "I'm not going to be happy with just building. If I want to thrive, I'm going to have to confront the lies of my father."

Ladies and gentlemen, you and I, we must build but simultaneously, we have to bring down what previous generations have constructed that run counter to the word, the will, and the way that is God. Are we willing to deconstruct the altars of Joash? Are we willing to confront the lies about... again, this world is full of relativism. It is full of just decadence, perversion. So many things that with truth and love we must confront. But two opposites cannot occupy the same space. Let there be a generation that has the audacity not just to build, but to deconstruct the lies where our children will walk upon the ruins of what we bring down in our generation. That's what I'm believing for.

JAMES: That's what he wants. Let me just say something very, I think very, very important here. Sammy, he didn't leave us here to prepare us for the next kingdom. That kingdom is prepared. No gates of hell, no deceiver, no death, no division, no darkness. He left us here to build his kingdom and overcome as overseers of his garden. And heaven and earth are the Lord's. We're his overseers.

You and I don't have to give our marriage, our family, our community, our subdivision, our city, our county, our state. We don't have to give one part of God's planet earth to the enemy to walk over. If the church will stand up, and it has to be the body of Christ, not the somebody's! The enemy can pick off a somebody in a moment.

SAMUEL: But not the body!

JAMES: Not the body of Christ. It is the body of Christ the gates of hell came. And I'm telling you, one of the great things that God's going to do is we're going to do in correction when we tear down the idols or we tear down the incorrect belief systems and the lies, we're not tearing down the person that's been deceived or defeated by them or even distracted and too much attracted to them. We're going to get that person well. We're going to get them healed. We're going to do everything this says for them, so they become alive in Christ by letting the living Christ live in fullness through them and they become fruitful in every way. This is what we're doing.

We're not amputating body parts where we have a valley of scattered body parts like there were dry bones. We have severed the members of the body just for disagreeing with something rather than healing them. You and I are actually trying to pull together no racial divide, no national divide, no sectarian divide, no partisan divide. We want to see us one in Christ. This is a miracle. This is what you're talking about.

SAMUEL: When we are one in Christ, final word here, when we are one in Christ, instead of riots, revival.

BETTY: Yes! Yes!

JAMES: Awakening! The love of God prevailing.

SAMUEL: Instead of lockdowns, open heavens! Whoa!

JAMES: Setting people free!

SAMUEL: Isn't that crazy? Instead of political affiliation, prophetic designations. Look what these guys did in the prison. The greatest Christian ever, perhaps, Saul of Tarsus is in stocks and he's just been preaching the truth and setting people free. They put him in prison. They lock him. Said, "Don't let him out." And they praised God in freedom and God blows the doors open. And the guy that was afraid he was going to get in trouble because they got out and he was going to kill himself with a broadsword, he said, "What do I have to do to be like you?" And he got saved, led them down Main Street. Led the whole town to Christ. And the city of Philippi became one of the greatest supporters of the greatest missionary on earth. That's what God wants to do in America!

SAMUEL: That's what's next! Get ready to thrive! That's it!

JAMES: Get ready! Get ready! Hey, hey! How y'all doing? Are y'all still awake? If you were in here, you'd be awake. I hope you're awake. We want you to have this book.

Sammy, I tell you what, we're a pretty good one-two punch. I love you, man!

SAMUEL: I love you!

JAMES: I'm so proud of you. All right, listen to me. I want you to get the book. Here's what I'm going to ask you to do.

Father, I want you to help everybody, they may be excited right now. I hope they are.

They should be! Have every reason to be excited! But I want you to move with compassion and love on them perhaps beyond anything they've ever tasted. And I want every person watching to say, "I'm going to be somebody's miracle right now."

I want to show you where you can be a miracle. I'm telling you, not wishful thinking, not hope, wish we could find a cure. The perfect, absolute perfect miracle in somebody's life. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Open Captions:

>> How old is she?

>> 68.

TAMMY: We're out in the middle of absolutely nowhere. I was amazed when we came to this water source to find this precious older lady washing her clothes. But then also to find out that this is also their source of water. This is also what they drink.

In the sixth chapter of Galatians we are advised not to grow weary in well-doing. In my years of travel with *LIFE Today*, I've witnessed firsthand the well-doing of compassionate followers of Christ. Like this well in Eastern Europe. Or this well in South Asia. Or this well in East Africa.

James and Betty, the legacy you started has impacted the lives of millions around the world. I know because I've seen the wells of life-giving water in communities that had been plagued with death. And you have been their advocate even in the midst of your own pain and grief. Contaminated water continues to be a dangerous reality for some of the most vulnerable people on earth.

Open Captions:

>> The sickness starts with runny noses, then a bad flu disease with diarrhea and vomiting. Even us old people get stomach pains.

TAMMY: Grandmothers like Petronas must either give their grandchildren filthy drinking water or watch them die from dehydration.

So I appeal to you, James, to you, Betty, and to your viewers, please do not grow weary in well-doing because clean water changes everything! But only if we choose to give it.

In the studio:

JAMES: Wow! Tammy, we really do love you. You are so precious. To have lost your sweetheart, your husband, and yet, you've gone all over the world with us to give the very thing that took your husband's life. And it gives them life because they've never had clean water. The precious, precious images we see of people needing what love provides, needing water.

I want to ask every one of you who are watching right now to just kind of be still in your heart and spirit and think, Lord, could I give a cup of water in your name? Could I give or help give a well? We found 350 areas in the need because the pandemic is greater than ever. And the crisis and difficulty is greater than ever. And you could say, what about support? Think how many people don't even have a job. What we need is the kind of miracle that we've witnessed, the kind that really, Sammy talks about in his book when you don't just survive but you are blessed with a fullness and fruitfulness that is supernatural. And you need that!

Would you, wherever you are right now in your journey, would you say Lord, I do need some miracles. Or maybe you just experienced one. Would you say, Lord, I want to be the miracle in that village. I want to be the miracle for those families. Lord, I want to be the answer to the prayers of every one of those people right now, for their family. I want them to have Water for LIFE. I know the missionaries will tell them about the water of

life but because of what you have done in my life I want to give that life.

Would you please prayerfully, compassionately, would you just get up and go get your bankcard and use it like a check? That's really the way you should always use it. But would you go online or would you dial the number that's there as a prayer line. Many people call it a day to rejoice that they've seen a miracle or to ask you to agree with them in prayer. But I'd like to see that number right now become a lifeline where you call and be determined to get through.

Remember you can go online, or you can call but take your bankcard and say, here's the gift. You may be able to give a well. \$4800 gives a well. And it lasts a lifetime for the people in that entire region. Did you know that -- this is not an exaggeration -- average, a gift of \$48 gives ten people water the rest of their life. \$144 gives 30! If you could give a well, I believe you will. Maybe you say, I can't do that, but I can give part of it. \$1200 and three people join you, we've got a well. \$2400, one person joins you we've got a well.

Father, I pray that happens. And I pray people will leap at the opportunity, in Jesus' name.

By the way, don't think \$48 is not much. For ten people it's life. Would you please go? We have some gifts to send you. We're sending you our granddaughter's devotional book that is absolutely amazing! We'll also send you, I'm just going to tell you right now, *From Survive to Thrive*. This was absolutely birthed and written and poured out in the midst of incredible pressure! And you've already heard the glory. You see it in Sammy's countenance. We want to bless you. So would you right now, would you give life? Please do it. Thank you so much!

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Dirty disease-filled water. How desperate would a mother need to be to consider giving this contaminated substance to her child? For many mothers and their families living in extreme poverty, this is their only choice.

But with your help they won't have to make this choice ever again. Mission: Water for LIFE provides clean, disease-free water for thousands of children and their families giving them a life 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 ten. \$72 will provide for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift, we'll send you *Speak Your Name* devotions and declarations on the reality of Jesus. Filled with stunning imagery, these 40 encouraging devotions by Laney Rene serve as a reminder of the power of Jesus' name.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Be Refreshed" pitcher. This beautiful ceramic pitcher is decorated with Proverbs 11:25 and is sure to make a lovely addition to your table or home.

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, inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio:

JAMES: There is no question in my mind, you've heard the truth and you've seen what love does. You see where love is needed. We want to send you Laney's book for any gift. Boy, what a miracle this precious granddaughter is.

And Sammy's book, you just give a cup of water, we want to give you a well of water spiritually in every way we can. Both these books will help do that.

Thank you so much for watching. Thanks for sharing. Sammy, thank you for receiving the fullness of God's Spirit. We love you.

SAMUEL: Thank you.

JAMES: Thank you. Love you, honey! Love all of you.