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Week 24: Spring Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Michael Brown

BETTY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty and this is James.

JAMES: You know we're so glad to get to join with you. We're glad to share our guests. You know when I know you notice? We're here with you because we love you. We actually care about you. Well, you don't know me. Well, you know, you don't know me all the way either. I would hope you'd love me the way God does when you find out I'm so far from perfect. Ask her, she knows.

Listen to me. We bring people in here that we love because they love God and they love you. They really do. You know what many of you tell us? "You always want to encourage your guests. You love these ministers and these writers and these leaders and these gifted people and you want to help them." Yes! Because that's what God does through yielded vessels. That's what you want to do. It's the reason we've been able to touch so many lives and reach so many people for Christ because of you! "How shall they preach unless they're sent?"

The bottom line is not even in the proclamation. "Unless they hear they can't believe." They've got to hear to believe. And "How are they going to preach unless they're sent?" The bottom line in it is you. It really is. You're the ones putting God's arms around people who are overlooked through the missionaries. You enable them to do it!

We bring people in to help get you in God's arms of love and comfort. And Jesus said he came to bind up the brokenhearted. And Betty, there are a lot of brokenhearted people.

BETTY: Yes, there are.

JAMES: Ever since we lost our daughter, it's very hard to go to a funeral. When you lose a loved one for any reason, it is a blow. When someone loses their health.

We've got a friend here that has written an incredible book. I want you to listen to the title of it: *Has God Failed You?* Now let's look at its subheading: "Finding faith when you're not even sure God is real."

You think Betty and I didn't look up at our God when we said good-bye to our daughter as she went to the next kingdom? Why? Why? Why? Where are you? He was all over us or we wouldn't be sitting here.

Michael Brown, you're one of the most gifted individuals I've ever known. You are not only gifted to teach and share but you're incredible, in my opinion, a lump of yielded clay in the potter's hand. I've never seen anybody with the incredible training and education and abilities God's given you listen more attentively with a childlike spirit to try to hear the Father through any vessel he is speaking through. Why in the world did you write this book right now?

MICHAEL: There is a real crisis of faith in the church, and we can read about all the statistics of people dropping out. The so-called nones, n-o-n-e-s. They have no religious affiliation. Things are just plummeting in the church around us. But I didn't write the book for a statistic. I wrote the book for individual people because people have questions and people are hurting. And people wonder, is the God of the Bible really good? Can I really trust him? People say, "Well, I saw it says pray and you get answers. And we prayed just like you. We've prayed, healings promised. We prayed, the healing didn't come."

And we do not have an environment in a lot of our churches where people can ask questions. They don't know where to go with their doubts. They have pain. They feel it is not real and we just kind of go on. You show up at the service, everyone is smiling. Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! You're happy, I'm happy. Praise the Lord! And you go home with aches and pains on the

inside and people just drop out.

So a publisher reached out to me and they said, "Mike, would you consider writing a book about the great apostasy, the falling away that's taking place?" As I began to look at it I began to feel the heart of people. As I wrote the book, I was on my knees saying, Lord, I'm not adequate to write this. I haven't suffered enough personally. I haven't gone through enough trauma personally to write this.

But as I was writing this I saw people's faces. I felt the weight. I felt the weight of the parents that lost a child. I felt the weight of the one that put their trust in God and it seemed that he didn't come through. I felt the pain of the person struggling with the questions of an atheist. And what about God? And how could there be a good God?

When I felt that pain and reality, then I've written a commentary on the book of Job so I've wrestled with these issues. So I said the message must come now. People feel as if God's failed them. They don't know where to go for answers and God is waiting to make himself known to them. I never saw a more opportune time for this book. And I've written over 40 books but this one is different because it is kind of a life and death message that it is dealing with.

JAMES: What are some of the things... and I don't think Michael writes anything that is not worthy of not only a look but a read. So what do you say in here that you could share some little insight that would help viewers right now saying, Dr. Brown, give me some kind of a word of encouragement like what's in the book.

MICHAEL: Let's start here. What if there is no God? When people have faith questions, that's one of the big things. Is he really there? Well, let's think of that scenario. If there is no God, there is no meaning, there is no purpose, there is no destiny, there is no plan, everything happening is just random, the freak processes of an unguided evolutionary process, we're matter? There is no problem with evil because a human being killing another human being is no different than a spider killing a fly. There is no sense of when I wake up in the morning there is a reason to live.

So when people struggle with things you say, well, just step back. Does something inside of you know that there is more? Is there a looking for purpose or destiny? A horse doesn't struggle with that. A dog or a cat, they don't struggle with that. God himself put something in us. The very fact that we know that something is wrong. The very fact that something inside of us protests against injustice is because God himself put us here and God himself has a purpose.

And often, the things that are the worst and the most difficult and the most painful are the very things God can use to make us into better people, and to ultimately deepen the meaning of our lives. What Satan and society and circumstances mean for evil God himself can turn for good.

Look, at the moment of conception, when the two cells come together we have our D.N.A. D.N.A. is so lengthy that billions of letters and numbers of coding, however you want to describe it, if you read one letter a second it would take you like 96 years just to read your D.N.A. code. God himself fashioned us in a meticulous way. And if we factor him out, there is no meaning. It is just utter chaos; eat, drink, and be merry, tomorrow you die. If you factor him in, now even the worst situations rather than being stumbling stones can become stepping stones; they can become platforms of opportunity for transformation.

There are things I've been through in life, mistakes I've made, I hate it, I wish I didn't do it but I know I wouldn't be who I am in God today without going through that and learning from it. If we can recognize that God by his very nature is a redeemer, then the very worst situation can become the best situation. We factor him out, it is hopeless. We factor him in everything changes.

JAMES: What do you hear when you think about the book and people thinking this? What races through your mind, Betty, as you look about? Because you keep up with what's going on. You're very much in touch with what's going on in God's world on God's planet because it is his planet. What rises up in your mind?

BETTY: Recently, I was watching the news, I do a lot to try to keep up with things, as you just said and I heard a woman on there say, "I used to be a Christian." I thought what? It made me

very sad. It made me weep because I thought, what happened in her life that she thinks she used to be a Christian? In other words, she was so hurt, disappointed, let down, whatever, she just, so to speak, fell off the cliff away from God. I thought, that had to make God sad because he did create every one of us in his image, and he is there when our hearts are broken. He is there when disappointment comes our way. He is there when life starts crashing in.

I know personally, because I guess the worst thing that we feel like has happened is losing our daughter. And God was there I can say every second, every moment, every day of my life, and he still is. And he has become more real to me than I have ever felt in my life. I feel like he can use the experience that he has walked me through to help others to know that he will never leave us or forsake us.

MICHAEL: I have a chapter in the book that asks the question, does prayer really work? Because you go through it. Especially praying for the health of your child and you see the promises. It would be easy just to say well, we're just misinterpreting the Bible because God doesn't heal. But we know he does heal! And you say, okay, but what happened to the prayers? And then you realize all right, a lot of things don't make sense in this world but they will make sense in the world to come.

But we're not just telling people just close your eyes and just believe what we're saying. We're saying, here's the deal. That through prayer you develop a relationship with God. And the same God who promises us answers also has Jesus teaching us that we have to keep praying and not lose heart. He also has us learning with parables that there is going to be testing and trials. You have the Psalmist saying, "I'm soaking my pillow with tears." This is the same Psalmist who is praising God and is always faithful. "Soaking my pillow with tears. How long, O Lord?" That's all in the Bible. Prayer is not just snap your fingers and get these instant results. Prayer is developing a relationship with God.

And the fact is in this world we're going to live with a certain holy tension. We see the king of God breaking in and miracles and the impossible happening and then we suffer loss. That's the reality. I could come up with an easy theology that says well, God doesn't heal, God doesn't

intervene so just forget about it. But that would be false -- and it would be contrary to what he does. Or I could say, hey, it always just happens like this. You just speak these words and do this, you'll never have a problem. That's false! We live with holy tension in this world.

But what you said is everything. God will make himself known if we seek him, we'll find him. The last chapter of the book is a very intense chapter, and Nancy and I, when Nancy got saved, she was an atheist at the age of 19. So she understands that mentality. She became an atheist when she was eight years old and she's got so much compassion. She's always sensitized me to see the suffering and the pain in other people's lives. We looked at this together.

A friend's journal of decades in the Lord of uncertainty -- decades, believing but not believing. Is he there or not there? And this friend finally got to a breaking point and they said, "I'm going to seek God or die trying. I'm going to go after... Either this is real or its not." And all the promises, and this friend of ours laid out hundreds of verses about the nature of God. And literally every single day got on his knees and read the verses of who God is and renewed his mind, and God changed his life. They pressed in, they went through the agony, where is he? Are you going to ever answer me? And they came out of the valley on the other side a changed person.

He's faithful. It may feel like he's failed us and we have to have an environment in our churches where people can be open because a lot of places you can't say you're struggling. There is a chapter in the book called, "Permission to Doubt." And there's a verse in the book of Jude, "Have mercy on those who doubt." I heard one message preached on that in 50 years. I preached it a few months back. I've never heard anyone else preach on it. There is a doubt that's sinful like why do you doubt? In other words, "You've been with me long enough," Jesus is saying, "You should believe. You should trust me." But there is another doubt where the word says, "Have mercy on those who doubt." No! We can't talk about our doubts. That's unbelief! Man, what's wrong with you? You can't say you're struggling. That's showing weakness. Or we don't have answers and we're afraid for the questions to be asked at all.

What we have to do is create a secure environment where people can come with their doubts, their question, their pain, and just like you're doing and have done for decades, you look at them

with a smile and say, "We're going to get through this because of him."

JAMES: You know, I want you to read this book. I hope you read on our Stream, "The Stream" which is some of the most brilliant God-loving people, neighbor-loving people on the planet. And Dr. Brown is on there, really more than anybody sharing wisdom. I really pray you get this book. Please hear this. If you just say, I'm a needy person, and you're not talking to the air. You're talking to the power that made the air and everything. Everything exists by him. Bigger than atomic energy. Unbelievable! God hear me. If you're there, whoever you are, hear me! You're going to sense in your spirit there is someone there. Here's what will happen. He'll adopt you and become the perfect Father.

Doc, if we could just help people see that there is a Father that loves them perfectly, that cares about all their concerns. He knows how to comfort. He knows how to address an issue and to direct our steps. He allows his wisdom, understanding -- not just questions -- understanding! That's what real wisdom is; understanding it from God's point of view. And they let that wisdom flow, it changes everything. And it's just simply a matter of inviting him in. You don't see him but he is there and he will actually become a father that will never leave them. And they can live in the comfort and shelter of the Almighty God who will become their personal father.

That relationship is available to everyone watching. And everyone you've written to show them the greatness of the God that they may even question his existence, may feel he's failed, life fails, we've got challenges, and problems and pain and misery every square inch. But God is able to become the source of comfort, the shield, the covering, the shelter from the storm. That's where you're trying to take people.

MICHAEL: That's the only answer. It is the ultimate answer. There is a chapter in the book, "What would Job Say?" And if anybody had a reason to have questions it was Job because it seemed like the God that he loved and worshipped and served had become evil, had become almost like a demon, a destructive force. Who is this God?

And God never answered his questions but God revealed himself. And when he revealed himself,

it wasn't as some bully, it was to say, look at the world that I made. I even send water on isolated lands where they're aren't people to water the plants. And I rule over all the forces of nature.

And Job, where were you not just when I created the universe but when the mountain goats are conceived? How does that happen? And God's care and the beauty that he puts in creation, he reveals himself and that's more than enough. It's not a matter of turn your brain off. I talk about my own journey there as a Jewish follower of Jesus and challenged by the rabbis, and on my way to my Ph.D. all secular scholars I studied with, none of them believe what I believed. I understand the intellectual challenges, I understand the questions, we don't turn our mind off but when God reveals himself it is totally satisfying. And it is not a matter of turn your brain off. It is now it makes sense. Now he's real. And then in the midst of what seems to be unanswered prayer are all the tokens of his presence and the tokens of his answer. And the key thing is if we will learn to trust him you will never ever be disappointed. That's who he is.

So I'm a kid compared to you folks. I'm only 49 plus years in the Lord and just 66. But hey, I've seen that he is utterly faithful, trustworthy, and that the Bible itself can withstand all the scrutiny, all the attacks, all the questions. God is faithful, his word is true. And look! You know if there is a woman you respect, she doesn't just give herself away. You have to get to know her. Get her trust. Get her love. And then you come together. God is not just going to answer a prayer. Like God, if you're really there, show me. We'll go on our business. No, but if you really want him, he'll make himself real.

JAMES: I want to just say to you, why don't you say, okay, God, if you're there, I need you. And if you're God, you know I need you. You know the mess I'm in. You know my problems. You know my hurt, my pain. Yeah, he does, all of it.

Lord, I'm praying for that person right now that may be bewildered and puzzled, agonizing, maybe weeping. Let them know how much you understand and how much you care. And that we're here talking to them today because you care. You put your care, your concern, your love in our heart for all the people you gave your son to redeem. So Lord, help them to receive you in all of your fullness, in all your love, grace, and glory, in Jesus' name.

Tell him you receive him. You want him to be your Father. You trust Jesus as Savior. You may want to call that number and just tell someone, "I just prayed." And they'll pray with you. I've got a little Bible study book called *Knowing God as Father* because I didn't have a father but I got God as Father. I'll help you grow in that relationship.

If you'd like to have this book, and it is terrific, we'll send it to you if you ask for it. Dr. Brown, our viewers are the most awesome people, in my opinion, on the planet. We're in our mission feeding emphasis and this is the last week. We have 350,000 children rounded up that are malnourished. You can save their lives and give them a future.

Now I want you to watch closely but I want you to know, you're the miracle and the answer to every need in these precious children's lives. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Within the life of every child is God-given potential. We can see it in the dreams these children have for their future. Though he lives a meager life and has few possessions, Fernando dreams of moving to a city to become an architect. He'll design a school for Antonio, who dreams of becoming a teacher. He'll design a hospital for Rosa, who dreams of becoming a doctor. Who would have thought children with so little would have dreams so big?

But Fernando's mother knows that his chances for realizing his dreams are slim. She knows the painful reality that his food supply is unstable at best. And during lean months completely depleted. Already the scarcity of food has led to the deaths of many children. And with it their chance of a dream extinguished.

The biggest obstacle for children like Fernando is simply the lack of food. Food! It's as simple as that. By helping to provide just one child like Fernando with a daily bowl of food you'll be making a world of difference; not only for him but for every child who is holding on to a dream.

End of video

In the studio:

JAMES: I wish you could know what's going on in my heart, and I think surely in Betty's, when I look at those children, I love them all. I want to get God's arms around every one of them. I remember when we first went 30 years ago, Betty we saw these precious little children. And I held some of them as they were breathing their last breath. I held others that looked like they were too weak to walk. And we just began to love them.

And think about this, I stood in a graveyard where thousands of little children were buried, many of the little graves were just tiny and they were digging 10 and 20 of them a day! And Betty, we shared it with you, the viewers of *LIFE Today*. I didn't know if you'd help. Betty, we stopped the death cycle in so many areas. Did you know that we are absolutely certain that you've helped us save the lives of 17 million little children like you just saw? Did you hear what I said? One at a time -- 17 million! Many of them now are leaders. Many of them are teachers. Many of them are in law enforcement. Their whole life changed because you noticed the least of these, the too often overlooked. And you became their miracle.

I want to ask you right now, would you go get a bankcard? Or get a check? If you want to make it to -- listen to me -- make it to *LIFE* because that's exactly what you're giving. That's what you're giving. Use your bankcard like a check, that's how you should always use a bankcard, like a check. But I want you to dial that number that's always a prayer line for you. Or go online and you make the gift God's puts on your heart.

This is the last week. We need a miracle; \$30, \$50, \$100 feeds three, five or ten children. If you could give \$1,000 and feed 100 children, do it. We're also restoring the malnutrition clinics and those are \$24,500 apiece.

Father, we need some miracles. There could be 24 people right now who would give \$1,000. Maybe somebody could do it, I don't know what they can do. You know what they can do. You move them by your spirit, in Jesus' name.

Would you right now make the gift God put on your heart? Remember, the \$30, \$50, \$100 is not total childcare. It is nourishment and it saves lives. This is the last week in this emphasis. We need to hear from every one of you.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Across the continent of Africa, children are suffering facing severe malnutrition and even death. With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us.

Call now with your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. Also, please consider an extra gift to help immediately rebuild malnutrition clinics destroyed by record flooding in South Sudan. The urgent need is \$392,000 above our normal feeding budget and is critical to help save the lives of those who are suffering most.

With your gift of any amount we will send you "It is Well" Quiet Time Bundle featuring an instrumental music CD with 12 classic hymns and a 31-day prayer booklet to help renew your soul.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "No Greater Love" framed print. This portrait is a reminder of our Savior's love and the price that was paid for our salvation.

Finally with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant."

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

End of video

In the studio:

JAMES: Let me just say, it means so much to me and Betty to know that we can share a need that God cares about, and you meet that need. You really are a miracle to so many -- you're a miracle to us. You encourage us in all challenging times.

This last week I pray all of you if you can will help. If you'd like to have, as well as the other gifts we send to bless you, not to get a gift, to give you a gift of encouragement. If you'd like to have this book, you know someone you know desperately needs it, you help us touch those lives, we'll send it to you if you ask for it.

Dr. Michael Brown, continue to write, share, on the radio, television, and The Stream, TheStream.org. A lot of wisdom there. A lot of insight for how we turn the tide. Thank you for what you do and thank you so much for sharing this.

MICHAEL: Thank you.

JAMES: We really appreciate you.

MICHAEL: Love you, man!

JAMES: And we appreciate these viewers right here. Thank you for being our friends. Thank you for being friends to the least of these, and the too often overlooked. We really appreciate it. God bless you.