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Week Eight: WFL

James and Betty Robison

"Self-righteousness"

JAMES: James Robison here, Betty, welcome you to *Life Today*. This program will be a little different since you've had two shows. So if your friends, or anybody with a broken heart, or anybody who wants to know the best medicine, which is a joyful heart and laughter, tell them to watch Tim Conway; he'll give them a double dose of healing. I promise you. Right, Betty?

BETTY: Absolutely!

JAMES: They're going to laugh?

BETTY: They really will.

JAMES: Is it going to make them feel better?

BETTY: With a belly laugh.

JAMES: Today is a total change. Today, now focus here, I'm going to talk to you about the greatest enemy Jesus has had since creation. I'm going to talk to you about the greatest hindrance to the transforming power of the gospel. I'm going to talk to you about what keeps people from coming to the righteousness of God in Christ -- in Christ; to a relationship with God through Christ; not only through his death and atonement, and the power of the blood of Jesus, and the cross of Christ that covers all our sins, including shame -- all of it. The greatest enemy of the work of Christ, prior to the crucifixion until this very moment, I'm going to talk about it.

Do you want to know what it is? Self-righteousness. Now hang on! I've asked God to keep me calm, like we're just sitting around the family room. Most of you know when I would preach to 10,000, 20,000, for 35 years all over America, and then went all over the world to put loving arms around the overlooked and haven't stopped. And don't you wonder if I've ever stopped preaching with authority and with power and speaking truth to power. Don't you ever wonder what I say to a president or a business owner? You think if I talked to a guy without knowing it, he's got what Jesus says is the greatest effect, power, the greatest force even in his kingdom. Do you know what it is? It is a servant. Not slave -- servant; serve others.

Do you want to know what the enemy is? Do you know what it is? Could you look out there and tell them what it is? You're not going to get this fire -- am I okay to have a little fire in my bones?

BETTY: Absolutely!

JAMES: I used to have it in the stadium. I'm getting pretty calm. I try to stay calm because I don't want you to think I'm being overbearing.

Betty, I think you've heard; I don't know if I'm going to be able to control it because God is angry. His anger is stronger than the loudest thunder you've ever heard. He's told me I can express it but not anything like it would actually come through. So you may hear a few bursts. It's not James of old when he seems to be God's angry man in the wilderness. "You're so full of love. How can you be forceful?" Don't miss it. What is the biggest hindrance to people knowing Jesus?

BETTY: Self-righteousness. And it can affect all of us, James. There is a fine line there of being close to God and righteous as he sees us. Because he gave his son that we might have that; that we might have eternal life. And that we might walk in his truth and in his love. But then, if we get proud or judgmental about it, that's when the self-righteousness comes in.

JAMES: We become a hindrance to what righteousness does. I want to start making some things so clear to you and arouse a holy curiosity that you're going to say, James, however long it takes, I want you to walk us through this. Let's just understand that all the people -- now don't you miss what I'm saying to you. If you have a recorder, turn it on. If you're recording, you can play it over and over. You can take notes, write them down and soak yourself in the Word of God. And everything that comes out of my mouth, search the scriptures daily whether those things are so. They're not only here in the pages of this book, they are written in my heart. And they carry me; I don't just carry this book in a binder, this book is bound in my heart.

How many times have I said to you, if you watched us on *Life Today*, I have said thousands of times, get the Word of God out of the leather binder. Let it be bound up in your heart. Stop merely carrying the Bible to church; let the Word of God carry you. How many times have I said that? How about you take it -- excuse me. How about you take it seriously? How about you take it very seriously. Because this is not an idle word, it is your life! Do you understand that? It is your life! It is the life of God, the abundant life God wants us to experience and express.

Nobody in this book whose written what God says is his word tells you how righteous they are. Every one of these people makes it absolutely clear, other than Jesus, they are far from righteous without Christ. They're not boasting. They are imperfect people pointing to the perfect...

And do you know what self-righteous people do right now? If they disagree with another religious person, they do their best to destroy them. They could just disagree on a Bible verse. If you built marriages on what's tearing churches apart, you wouldn't need an explanation of why marriages are torn apart. Do you realize who it is that crucified Jesus? Do you realize who it is that stoned the prophets? Do you realize who rejected the righteous truth, the transforming power of God's -- do you know who quenched it? It was the self-righteous people who quoted the Bible, who scourged Jesus, stripped Jesus, mangled Jesus, demanded that a murderer be released, and murdered the Son of the living God, righteousness personified.

Do you want to know who is setting back people coming to Christ today? I know! I've only worked with about 25,000 different pastors in 600 citywide meetings. And do you know how I

came into 98 percent of those towns? Trying to keep fights under control among the shepherds, telling us who could be on the platform, who could pray, who could be in the counseling area. And I mean nothing nice to say about others. I have watched people, and I did it myself. I tried to do it to Billy Graham. He said, "Do you know all these people that you're telling me to avoid?" I said, "No, I don't." He said, "I do, and I highly suggest you spend time with people you've been taught to avoid." Betty, I did! And I didn't go and straighten everybody else out. I told them what I was concerned about, and I said it in such love that we changed each other.

I've been watching church leaders come together. Get this! They have differences, but they don't use their differences as a self-righteous sword to cut the heart out of the person they disagree with. They don't amputate everybody in the body of Christ, even if they think they are sick and wrong. I'm watching a miracle occur!

If we don't get self-righteousness under control, the gospel will not flow as freely as God wants it to flow. It was the Pharisees and the Publicans who crucified Jesus. They demanded his death. They demanded the prophets be stoned. They didn't listen to God; they had their own righteousness. And today, and I'm not trying to be unkind, but a lot of people who know the Bible very well use the Bible to destroy another person who knows the Bible very well, but they happen to have a different point of view. So instead of loving them back, to say could we just look at this? And not just say, you're so sick! I'm going to cut you off.

Did the father of the prodigal do that to that boy that wrecked the reputation after God blessed him? He destroyed everything. He wasted it in riotous living, and this Jew ends up in a pigpen. Did the father walk out of that pigpen and tell him what a rotten kid he was? Did he tell him how sorry he was, ought to be ashamed? No, sir. I believe he did what he did in the house and when he looked around, not from the porch but around the bend. I believe that the prodigal's father went to every bend. As a matter of fact, Betty, you know that in the last months, I feel like God showed me that the prodigal's father went out there and looked. He saw him in the pigpen. He didn't walk over and say, kid, do you realize how much you wasted what I gave -- do you realize how stupid you are? Do you realize how you shamed the whole family?

By the way, that's not how you get people right with God. And by the way, if you think that what I'm doing right now is self-righteous, I'm going to step over and tell you what it is. Don't you dare miss this because God said, James, as forceful as you are, you don't even approach. I am very angry. I'm more angry, James than you could adequately describe.

At what, Father?

I am angry at the shepherds, the under-shepherds who are supposed to be pointing to the Lord, who is the Shepherd. Those under-shepherds were not like David who killed the bear and the lion and the birds of prey and protected the sheep and took them to green pastures and took them to still water, to cool water in heat; in stormy weather and stormy days, got them to the calm water.

The shepherds today have allowed the predators and the beasts of the field to scatter the flock, to slaughter the flock -- even the innocent in the womb, to throw aside my truth, to cast it out of their education system, to throw it out of their entertainment and their joyful opportunities, to tear it out of leadership, to tear it out of courts. The shepherds have gone to church and not led my people to be the church, to be the body against which the gates of hell, are you listening -- the gates of hell cannot, must not prevail, and won't if the salt doesn't lose its effect, won't if the people put the light of my love on the lampstand, and if they would stand like a healthy body, not amputated, scattered parts, but a healthy body submitted not to some shepherd but to the Shepherd, to the Lord who is your Shepherd, to Christ who is the head. My under-shepherds have been going to church, and they've been singing while the predators are slaughtering my sheep, and I'm very upset about it.

This is my garden; it is my planet. Heaven and earth are mine! And I'm sick and tired of you allowing the deceiver, the trespasser, the liar, the divider, and the murderer to scatter my family.

Are you listening to me, pastor, Christian? Stop it! In the name of Jesus, and his righteousness, cast your self-righteousness aside. It ripped Jesus apart, demanded his death, while they held up the Bible to justify killing the Son of God. Are you listening?

How many people, Betty, do you think, have been kept from Jesus because of self-righteous people that don't like the guy up the street, don't like their pastor.

And don't ever make an idol out of your pastor and shepherds, don't you dare --. Many of you wonder, James, how come you -- some of you are saying wow! Whoo! Go out. And I did for 35 years in every stadium in the nation, and I got cheered for being a great voice. But you didn't see the voice. You didn't understand what he could do with you. And he sent me to the ends of the earth to put his arms around the least of these, and people began to become Christians. They began to love Jesus. They knew they weren't righteous; they knew he was righteous. They wanted to share his love, and it lit up their life. They're praying for me now.

But listen, I refuse to be the center of attention. I'm not a revolutionary leader. The leader is named Jesus! No shepherd you see, no preacher you see, no evangelist, nobody you like on television, I don't care who they are, if they're doing what God wants, they will stop the slaughter of the sheep. They're not going to keep singing "Kumbaya" while you're tearing babies out of the womb! And passing laws in the highest court to tell you you can't stop the murder.

And don't you dare talk about God in school. We can kick your kid out of the school if we want to. In the service, we can tell you that if you're a chaplain, you can't talk about God. We're going to tell you that is what self-righteousness has allowed to happen.

I want you to forgive me if you think James Robison is on a tear. Do you know God's whispering to me right now? And by the way, he's made it so clear to me. James, you and every Christian, just like Jesus said, my sheep -- my sheep, not church folks who say they're sheep. My sheep who may be meeting in all the different churches -- not just your church, Mr. Self-righteous, Miss Self-righteous, there is one church. It meets in many different settings and churches, but there is one church. He says that church, my sheep, hear my voice.

The Lord said, James, don't ever apologize for telling people you and I talk all the time. I talk non-stop to my prophets. That's the way I want to talk to all my people. I want them to know that

not only is the same Jesus that died and was raised, the same one is living in all of you so, therefore, he can be all over the world, so to speak, in person. I can be everywhere at once. I'd like to be in the room with all of you. In the family room, they'd know the Father. If you're at church, if you're at work, if you're at school, I want to be having fellowship. I told you, James, don't ever apologize for telling people you hear my voice clearly because my prophets did. And you think New Testament born-again Christians who understand so much more clearly the Word of God, my word, you think you can't hear me talking?

By the way, if you don't have the Word of God to tune your ears, you can't discern the spirit realm, light from dark, good from evil. You have to know the word to recognize the word to know his voice. Both voices -- the enemy, and he comes as a minister masquerading as a righteous one or even an angel of light. He's very crafty. So the word enables us to discern, and it makes our dim vision clearer and our dull hearing much sharper.

But self-righteousness in anyone, he didn't just crucify Jesus. He said, "He died for all of us! It was all of our sins." Hang on! Don't start throwing the Bible in my face to try to say, you know you're really kind of stupid. Thank you. You've been a great encouragement to me today. I'm trying to tell you, let's just say, let every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. There is only one perfect. His name is Jesus. It is his righteousness. He uses imperfect people.

Those who wrote this book are worse than any president you've ever known. And he says, imperfect people can share my truth, and not only what I reveal. They're imperfect; they admit it. Only one who is perfect.

Father, you have filled me with such overflowing love, compassion, courage, and convictions, and I want to become a doer, not merely a discussor, a debater, a defender, or even just a declarer of your word. It is all-important, but I want to be a doer of the word. Do what you say, and the house stands against all the storms. And I want to inspire your people to not just hear the word, do the word, and watch their marriage, their family, their community, their schools, their state, their nations. I am telling you, God wants you to know this is his planet, and he is tired of us

allowing the trespasser to tread over us, to walk on us and trample us and trample his will. He wants us to stand up, suit up in his armor and start walking over the enemy's desires like dirt! Crushing him like you would a spider on the floor, crushing him like you would a scorpion, killing them like you would a serpent. That's what he wants us to do. This may be one of the most important messages you'll ever hear.

Two-fold, self-righteousness is the greatest enemy of his righteousness. It destroys everything he wants to do through his body. It destroys your effectiveness. You're not sent here to correct everybody. You want to direct them with truth but in love. And you will give them the covering when the prodigal comes home. You won't tell them what a bum they are and how they've got to be a slave. You're going to cover them with your righteousness. You're going to put a ring of sonship that can never be taken away, and you're going to put peace on their feet. And in the midst of a self-righteous brother, you're going to throw a party.

Father, give us the righteous, in Jesus' name.

Thank you for joining us sharing *Life Today* every day all over the world, and so often, with what Jesus called "the least of these," the unnoticed. Right now, we need an overflow of love. So I'm asking God to let us drill more than the 300 water wells we're targeting. It is \$4800 to drill a well. There are many of you watching who could drill a well. So many who would give \$2400 and pray another joins you, we've got a well. \$1200, and say, God, let three more join me, and they do, and we've got another well.

Most of the support comes from people who give \$48 because that's what they can do. I'm asking you to do what God leads you to do because he will only lead you to do what he enables you to do. I want you to look in and see what God's love is doing through you. Watch it.

On the mission field

SHEILA: You can probably see the road stretching out behind me. That's maybe, I don't know, I would guess about a mile. But do you know that many of the mothers, that's how far they have to

walk each morning? I've asked several mothers, "So when do you get up?" They say we have to get up at 4:00 because we have to make the hour-long, 30-minutes, 40-minutes whatever walk to the hand-dug well where the water is filthy, it is contaminated. But they have to get there early, or there's no water left, knowing that the very water they're taking back to those they love might potentially be what kills them.

Honestly, I wasn't sure what a hand-dug well looked like. We walked up to it, and it is just literally -- it is just a hole in the ground. Most of them are surrounded by a tire. That's the kind of perimeter of it or a couple of sticks on either side. It takes two people a week to dig deep enough to get some water. One of the moms told me that so many of the children end up getting diarrhea that comes from drinking this kind of water.

I'm asking you to help us. The need here is urgent. So here's what I'm thinking. Can you think of one thing that you can live without to give them the one thing they can't live without? What they need is clean water. I'm not asking for a car or a television. They just want to provide their children with clean, healthy water so that they don't get sick. It will give mothers hope, and it will give children a future.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Sheila, you're amazing. I don't know how many of you know, but Sheila said she wanted to do evangelism and wanted to teach the Bible. But the third part of her dream was she wanted to help the poor, the least of these. And she's getting to do that at a very important time of her life.

I hope you notice that Betty and I are here about half the time now. And you love Sheila, and you love our son Randy. So obviously, you recognize our love not only for one another and for God and for you, but that we want to share the very best with you. And you notice we always try to bring through others so that we, as much as you might appreciate what we're doing, we're not the center; these are our focal points. And you can see the glory of God, and you send Sheila to

fulfill the last part of her three-part vision, the one she thought would be most difficult.

And Betty, our viewers are changing millions of lives by giving clean water. Isn't it amazing to watch?

BETTY: It really is. I have to comment on Sheila's spot there that you just watched. I feel like Sheila was pleading on behalf of those mothers. Because you see, as a mother, I always feel the hearts of those mothers as they're pouring that dirty, filthy, contaminated water into that bucket. And then they're going to offer it to their children? You say, why would they do that? Because that's all they have. They have to have water to even survive, maybe even another day.

So let's remember that when we're showing you the children, we love to show you the children. We love to show you when they've been helped and when they've been restored again. But think about the heart of the mother when you give. And say, what would I want for my child as you offer the best offering God asks you to give.

JAMES: Thank you, Betty. Do you know that the attributes of the Holy Spirit are so much mother, so much the sweetness of beauty, feminine qualities? Betty, I'm asking God for a miracle, and I'm asking that everybody watching would say, "I'm going to give a drink of water. I'm going to identify with the mothers and the need, and I'm going to be the answer to that mother's prayer and her heart cry. I'm going to make the greatest gift I can make." If you can give a well, do it. Part of a well, do it. \$48, 10 people water the rest of their life. There is some point at which you can help. Get your bank card, write a check, make it to *LIFE*, go online or call the number. Make the gift of love and life God put on your heart. You have been blessed today. Now let's bless those who never thought anybody would notice. But God did through you.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Waterborne illness is a killer that strikes the most vulnerable. For many impoverished families, the death of a child is the tragic result of having no choice but to drink contaminated water. But with your help, they won't have to make this choice ever again.

Mission: Water for LIFE provides clean, fresh drinking 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 for 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 *Bible Promises For Life*, the ultimate handbook to everything God guarantees you in his word. A powerful resource that will give you the confidence to face life's troubles. With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "I Will Give You Rest" throw. It is a reminder of our Savior's promise of rest to those who trust in His grace and love.

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. You may request our new, inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: I think this is one of the most beautiful bronzes. The children look so filled with peace, like the Rwandan orphans who climbed in my lap. I said, "That looks like Jesus," when somebody showed me the picture. I couldn't be happier. We want to send this to you for a gift of \$1200. You're going to put the arms of Jesus around a lot of precious children and families.

Thank you for helping us share God's love so clearly, so effectively. We'll send you some gifts that will bless you, but you're giving the greatest gift; you're giving life. Thank you!