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Week 13: Rescue LIFE

James and Betty Robison

Benny Tate

JAMES: I am really glad you're here. *Defy the Odds*, now hang on, I'm James Robison, this is Betty. I need to tell you something. God is about to take back oversight of his garden, it is not Eden. Heaven and earth are the Lord's; it is his earth. Planet earth is his garden; he's about to take it back. Our guest is Benny Tate. I think it is Rock Springs, is that right?

BENNY: It's Rock Springs Church.

JAMES: Yeah, it's close to Atlanta, south, and Jentezen is north.

BENNY: Yes!

JAMES: So y'all have got Georgia handled, right?

BENNY: Hopefully!

JAMES: Well, you are a man who defied the odds. I want to ask you, Benny, when you talk about odds -- and by the way, Jentezen Franklin has written the forward to this. I want you to take us on a quick journey. We've got about 15-16 minutes. That's a long time for television with a book. Glen Beck will give you five minutes and Oprah used to give you maybe 10-12. But here's the deal. I want you to take us through the story. You know it will bless people because they face odds too. Show us the odds you faced and show us what God did with those odds because you have defied them in his power. Tell

us about it.

BENNY: Well, you know Brother James, Booker T. Washington said you don't judge a person's success by what they accomplish in life but rather by the obstacles they overcome to accomplish whatever they accomplish. There used to be a columnist by the name of Ann Landers. You probably remember Ann Landers.

JAMES: Let's face it, we've been around.

BENNY: Ann Landers was a columnist for 56 years. She was asked the question, "What is the number one question that you're asked? What is the number one question? You get 12 million letters a week -- 12 million letters a year, excuse me. What is the number one question?" She said, "The number one question is what's wrong with me? What's wrong with me?" So people have odds that they need to defy. I can tell you a story.

JAMES: By the way, isn't the enemy the liar and the accuser? He just pours it on us.

BENNY: Sure he is! James, my mother had a sixth-grade education. She met a man and spent a night, maybe two with this man. To make a long story short, I was conceived. And she had two children, she had no daddies, but she had babies and she had a sixth-grade education. So she goes to a Pentecostal lady by the name of Miss Jennie Travis and says to Jennie Travis, "I have a baby. I have a little boy and I need help with him."

And Miss Jennie said, "What's his name?"

Mama said, "His name is Vincent, V-i-n-c-e-n-t."

This Tennessee lady said, "I can't pronounce that. But can I call him Benny?" James, she started calling me Benny.

But she did something, Betty, more important than that. She would place her hands on

me, and she would say, "God, I believe you've got a special plan for this baby's life. I believe, God, that you're going to use this baby's life. I believe you're going to raise this baby up as a man of God and he is going to preach your word. I just believe that."

I lived a few years with Jennie Travis and eventually, my mother came back. James, she came back with a man I guess you could say he was my stepfather. He was the man that when I was in my mother's womb, he took her to a medical clinic and said, "We're going to take care of this baby. We're going to end this baby's life."

My little sixth-grade-educated mother ran out of the clinic. And she said, "Nobody is going to take my baby's life! Nobody is going to take my baby's life."

But they came back to get me, James and Betty, and I was raised up by that stepfather. And just about every day of my life he would remind me that I was illegitimate, but he would use another word. He would remind me that I was ignorant.

JAMES: So he'd use the word that started with a B.

BENNY: He used the word that started with a B. I heard it more times than I care to remember. He told me I would never amount to anything in life. You know death and life are in the power of the tongue -- death and life. See God created this world with words. Words are powerful. Your words are powerful.

Miss Betty, I started believing that. I started believing I couldn't learn. I remember there came a day that my mother took my sister, and my stepbrother and sister to Murfreesboro, Tennessee. She said we were going for physicals. Three of us were going for physicals but I was going for a mental evaluation because I just couldn't learn. Because I was told every day, "You're ignorant. You will never amount to anything."

This man was physically abusive. He was physically abusive to me; he was physically abusive to my mother. He would beat my mother. My mother said to me, he would

always say to me, "When I get through with your face, when I get through beating your face, no man will ever look at you. When I get through with your face, you'll never get another man because no man would have you."

So, James and Betty, that's the environment that I lived in. We probably left 15 times. We would leave during the middle of the night. Mama would say, "Grab your clothes" and we would leave. We would always go back. I remember finally saying to mama, "Mama, why did we always go back?"

She said, "Benny, I just had a sixth-grade education. I just had a sixth-grade education, and I didn't have anywhere to go."

That's why, James, in our church I started homes like the Potter's House for Women and Melba's Manor for unwed mothers because girls and ladies need a place to go. But we lived in that and eventually left. But when we left, things didn't get a whole lot better. We started living in nightclubs. We sold whiskey illegally. It was just a dysfunction. We didn't know anything about church. I was never in church with mom. There was no church background.

I remember the day came that my mother went to bed. I can still remember as a boy going to my mother's bed.

JAMES: How old do you think you were then?

BENNY: I would have been about 15. I go to my mother's bed, and she won't get out of bed. I said, "Mama, what's wrong?" I didn't know but she had had a relationship that had gone south. And James, we'd had so much hell that she decided to just end her life. She said, "Life's not worth living."

So she decides she doesn't want me to find her. So, Betty, she puts a pistol in her pocketbook, she drives to her first cousin's house that she had partied and caroused with.

She knocked on the door of that first cousin's house and she said, "Can I spend the night with you?" Just planning on doing one thing.

And that first cousin said, "Yes, you can. But I want you to know something. I'm not the person I used to be. I'm not the person that partied and caroused with you. I've gone down to Temple Baptist Church and Jesus has changed my life. And more than anything, you need Jesus to change your life!"

And she began to talk with my mother. She said, "Can I call our pastor and let our pastor come and talk with you?"

And she called the pastor, Miss Betty, and that pastor came and led my mother to faith in Jesus Christ. I've often said, the place where my mother went to end her life, she found life! She found abundant life. She found eternal life. She found life.

Brother James, the next morning, somebody said, you may not believe what Benny Tate believes but you'll believe he believes what he believes. The next morning my mother pulled up. She's got red hair. She got out of that car, she started walking toward me and she looked different. My mother looked different.

She walked into that house, and she said, "Benny, I want you to know, we shouldn't have lived like we lived. We shouldn't have lived like we lived. But I want you to know, you've got a new mother -- you've got a new mother. Your mother got saved last night!"

And my sixth-grade-education mother, Betty, I would go to bed and I'd get into the bed and I'd hear her praying things like this, "God, Benny's been out doing stuff he shouldn't be out doing. But God, I want you to save my boy! God, I want you to save my boy! God, I want you to deal with his heart."

That went on for quite some time. And one night about midnight, I said, "Mama, I can't take it anymore." I still believe conviction is real. God dealt with my heart. I said,

"Mama, I can't take it anymore." I said, "Mama, I want to give my life to Christ."

She said, "Let's call the pastor."

As a 16-year-old boy, I knelt by a couch and the pastor said, "We've got to pray." His name was Clayton Jones.

I said, "Clayton, I don't know how to pray."

He said, "Put your hands in mine." And he led me in the sinner's prayer. He led me in the sinner's prayer and salvation changed my life. I'm so grateful that God thought it, Jesus brought it, the blood bought it, the Bible taught it, the Holy Spirit wrought it, the devil fought it, but this old boy caught it! I'm glad I got saved, Miss Betty and James, he radically changed my life!

James, after a little while, as dysfunctional as we could be, I said, "Mama, God has called me to preach. God has called me to preach." I wouldn't get up -- I wouldn't give a book report in school. I would take an F rather than give a book report. People would come, I'd hide under the bed. I'd run for the back door I was so timid and shy. But I said, "Mama, God has called me to preach."

She said, "Well, boy, you need to preach."

JAMES: I want you to stop right here. The only way you stop the lawlessness is changed hearts. What happened to his mother, that cousin, was it a cousin?

BENNY: Yes, a first cousin.

JAMES: What happened to Benny, this man is a miracle. Please get this. That's why I had to stop. God wants you to be the miracle.

BENNY: That's exactly right.

JAMES: You are watching this program for one reason, God loves you. The most gifted speakers can't show you how much he loves you. He put that love on a cross, but he wants to take you in those loving arms and change your life. Would you let him? Would you just say, God, you had to love me to give your Son for me. I give you my broken life, my hurt heart. I put it in your hands. Shape me in an image that looks like Jesus, like Benny, like his mother, like you did me.

Betty, we're listening to a miracle right here.

BETTY: Absolutely.

JAMES: You heard those same things from the enemy. I want you to keep going. Listen, if you gave your life to the Lord, you call that number. I don't want you to stop listening, but you tell them, I gave my life to the Lord. I'm going to send you a book; it is a Bible study, and it is a little bit of my testimony, *Knowing God as Father*. I'll send it to you. You just tell us, I just gave my life to God. Continue the story, Benny.

BENNY: Brother James, as I said, "Mama, God has called me to preach."

She said, "You think so?"

I said, "I really do. It's not something I want to do."

JAMES: A shy kid, that's what it was.

BENNY: Yes, just a shy kid. So I started preaching James. James, I would preach messages out of the book of spasm.

[Laughter]

I'd get up and say, "Take your Bible to the book of Spasm."

JAMES: That's how you would pronounce Psalms?

BENNY: That's how I was pronouncing.

JAMES: Did you preach out of the book of job?

BENNY: Oh yes! I preached out of the book of job. One night, James, a lady in the church, Miss Betty, she said, "Preacher Benny, what is this? What are the epistles?" I said, "That's the apostles' wives."

[Laughter]

James, literally, I knew nothing. But this is what I know. God is not looking for ability, he is looking for availability. Somebody said, "I'm praying for God to use me." No, no, no. You just get useable, and he'll wear you out because God wants to, God wants to use Betty, God wants to use James, God wants to use Benny.

JAMES: I'm going to retire and turn this thing over to Pastor Benny; okay? No, no. Retire is not in the Bible! Don't let it get in your mind or heart. Go ahead.

BENNY: Betty, he's not going to retire. He is going to re-fire. So I started, Miss Betty, I'm just preaching, and I reached 30 years of age, I reached 30 years of age. I'm preaching literally on street corners. I started out on street corners, I started out in jails. I just started anywhere people would let me preach.

But eventually, I reached 30 and my sister says to me -- remember I told you she had two kids. She said, "Benny, somebody wants to meet you."

I said, "Somebody wants to meet me? Who would want to meet me?"

She said, "Your biological father."

I said, "I'm 30, I've never met him. I never had a daddy. I would sure like to see him."

And she said, "You've got to go to a restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee, and you're going to meet your biological father for the first time."

So, Miss Betty, I drive to the restaurant. They described what he was going to look like, and we spend about an hour together. He starts telling me, "I was a professional gambler. I traveled the world playing cards." He said, "I ran a whiskey ring. I ran a whiskey ring." He said, "I spent quite a bit of time in the pen." He said, "I've lived a rough life -- a rough life."

And then we talked a little more. I said, "Let me ask you something." I said, "Don, I want to ask you the most important question. Are you a Christian? Are you a Christian?"

He said, "Yes, I staggered into a church about two years ago. I gave my life to Christ. Staggered into a church and gave my life to Christ." He said, "Many times in these two years, I came to hear you preach." He said, "You'd be signing books and you'd have cassettes." He said, "I'd get everything on your table."

I said, "I hope you paid for it!"

And he said, "Yeah. I'd get everything on your table." And then he said as we wrapped up, "I want to tell you three things."

I said, "Okay."

He said, "Number one, I'm dying." He said, "Number two, we've spent no time together

here on earth, maybe we can spend heaven together." And he said, "Number three," he said, "when I met your mother, I was deep in sin. Your mother was not a Christian," but he said, "God has used you all over the nation" and he said, "I've often thought, what your mother and I meant for evil, God meant for good. God meant for good."

JAMES: Benny, I love you so much. I love the Jesus in you, and he is all over you. Our stories are so similar. Probably, that's one reason Richard Lee wanted us to know each other, really. Richard, we love you; there in Atlanta. Tell everybody where your church is because people in the Atlanta area, a lot of people in Georgia need to go and get to know you and your Jesus.

BENNY: Well, see James, the book is *Defy the Odds*. My church is in Milner, Georgia, population: 600 people. James, look, our zip code is E.I.E.I.O.

[Laughter]

I mean it! No! James, the --

JAMES: You've got a country-western daughter over here just...

[Laughter]

BENNY: No, no, the June bugs don't show up until August. So it is *Defy the Odds*. Milner, Georgia, but Sunday, I'm just telling you Sunday, 7,400 people -- 7,400 people! So I want churches out there, I want preachers, I want people to know, you can *Defy the Odds*.

JAMES: We're giving away a journal. And listen, if you want this book, we will send it to any one of you who will just become an answer and set free a girl that's being trafficked by sex traffickers. They're basically locked up; you're going to see that in a minute. You help us set them free. Do you want this? And you want to use this message

to set a lot of people free? You make any gift to give people the gift of freedom and we'll send it to you today.

I've got to cut to the chase here. Listen to me. We haven't had a better program. We don't have bad programs. We have great programs. This is incredible. Let's *Defy the Odds*. I want you to set some people free right now. I want you to just see some girls that are held captive and used for sex objects; somebody's toy, never loved! We have built what you've built for children. It's Destiny House; it's huge! We have set thousands, our overseers of mission outreach, a thousand girls have been set free since the last time we asked you to help -- totally! Totally set free from trafficking. Watch this. You're the answer!

On the mission field

Announcer: This is a prison. Not a real prison run by a government and police officers, but it is a prison nonetheless. Room after room contains not much more than a bed. Depraved visitors to these types of prisons pour millions of dollars into human trafficking worldwide. The prisoners are scared young girls held captive by violent slave traders but the prisoners that live here did nothing wrong. They have broken no laws. The girl in cell 4D is innocent.

Open Captions

I have no control over my own body. I don't want to do the things they make me do. I feel trapped here like I'm in bondage. Even my heart feels like it is in bondage. My life is over. I have no more hope. When my life gets really bad, I cry out, "If there is a god, please save me."

Jesus was sent to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, and that the oppressed will be set free.

ANNOUNCER: Jesus told us that the captives will be released, and the oppressed will be set free. The mission of Rescue LIFE is to be the hands and feet of Jesus. So together we can rescue enslaved girls around the world.

End of clip

In the studio

JAMES: Betty, we are the ones who can set them free, people right there.

BETTY: Absolutely! As I watched that my heart just really breaks. There are no words to express how it breaks my heart to see what's going on there. These are the true innocent ones. These young girls, children are what they are! And they're being taken and abused and used and have no control over anything in their lives. They're being mistreated, and they're being used like they're not even human.

I think about that, and I think, we have two beautiful daughters, we have beautiful granddaughters, we have beautiful great-granddaughters. I can't even imagine what would happen if I saw someone treating one of my loved ones like that. There would be nothing left in me that couldn't just fight for every breath, and the right to get them back and to give them a life that they deserve and love. These girls deserve love. They have no love coming their way.

But there is an opportunity for you to express love for them in any way that you can, as much as you can give to help. Let's get these girls out of trafficking. Let's give them a life and show them God's love. Let's show them peace and joy. Let's allow them to be the little girls that they should be, and not tortured and abused and thrown away like trash. Please join us and let's make the difference. I know you will.

JAMES: Everything you heard from Pastor Benny is what God does. I walked out on our patio, and I'm having such sweet fellowship with God. He just talks to me; it's louder than out loud. He said, James, you know how I've said to all Christians, don't quench the spirit? Well, when it comes to the spirit of deception, when it comes to that spirit of dissension and death and destruction, you don't think I don't want you to quench that spirit? You crush it! Crush that spirit!

That is precisely what we're to do. We're to crush the spirit of the deceiver, the one who takes people captive and uses them like a toy and plaything. And then the ones who are using them are trapped by that spirit of self-seeking, self-serving lust. And God says, I want to crush it. That's what we do. We set them free. And we're reaching out to the people that are trapped that come by the thousands on 747s from every country in the world to Thailand and other places to use little children! Crush that spirit in the name of Jesus!

We have a matching gift; for what you give today will be doubled. It's a matching gift of \$320,000. Where did that come from? People like you. I want you right now to go to the phone or go online and say, I'm going to set a girl free. Do you know what it costs to set one of those, like the thousand that just got set free? \$128; that's to rescue them; reach them, rescue them and begin restoring them.

Would you right now, knowing it's going to be doubled, rescue one? It's doubled -- you'll rescue two. If you could rescue ten with a \$1280 gift, it will be 20. It doubles immediately. Everything you do. We have beautiful gifts to send you to say thank you. But you've just given these girls freedom. You've given them life! Life now and eternal because we point them to the Jesus that inspired you to touch the least of these, the trapped.

Right now, go get your bank card, use it like a check. Get your checkbook, make it to *LIFE*. You're giving life. Don't let anything stop you. Please don't delay! What you do will be doubled. Thank God!

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry of human trafficking.

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved, restore young lives and give them a future.

We have a generous \$320,000 matching gift. Now your gift of \$128 to help 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 today, we'll send you the *Prayers For Life* Journal, a perfect book to write down your prayers as you reflect on your relationship with Christ. With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll also receive the N.I.V. Thinline Bible, along with 365 days of *Prayer For Life*, a beautiful devotional filled with scriptures and key thoughts for each day of the year. Keep all three resources close by for your daily prayer time as you meditate on God's Word.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280, which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: I am believing with all my heart you just saved lives. Like I said, press through because there will be people calling to get *Knowing God As Father. Defy the Odds*; if you want it. I love you, buddy.

BENNY: I love you too, James.

JAMES: Let's keep working together to shake up the enemy's kingdom and walk over

him. Okay?

BENNY: James, I know of no greater need. I've been the pastor now for 32 years of one church, I know of no greater need than the need that you just described. I want you to know this; our church and our denomination, I'm here today with my mission director, Don Mapp. He's not only my mission director but for an entire denomination. We're going to be engaged, we're going to be involved because I know of no greater need than I just watched.

JAMES: God bless you. You know that too. You help us put God's arms around the overlooked. Thank you. Tell your friends to watch tomorrow.