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Week 17: Spring Mission Feeding

James Robison

Dallas and Amanda Jenkins #1

JAMES: I want to welcome you to *Life Today*. Betty is not here. Hang on. Betty is recovering from COVID. We didn't get the word out. It was very serious; she was in the hospital. I've had her home now for well over a week. She's off oxygen now. She did get pneumonia from it and I miraculously walked through it. So thank you. Keep praying for us.

Father, I pray for everyone that has family that's been hit by this. Some have had losses. You're the only one that can comfort these broken hearts. Lord, today is a great day on *Life Today*. Your life is going to be poured out all over this world because of what our viewers hear and see. And I thank you for it, in Jesus's name.

The Chosen, the most-watched evangelical Christian tool, perhaps ministry ever all over the world, *The Chosen*. And the writers, the ones who birthed and founded this incredible series on television that you can get, Dallas and his wife Amanda are here and they have written a book that's a devotional book called *The Chosen*. We'll talk about a couple of the things in here possibly. But it is available. And you can get it online.

I will simply tell you this, you help us give some children love and food, and we'll just send it to you today. You put God's arms around somebody and you know we always try to place in your hands something that builds you up because we're here for you.

And our guests today, Dallas and Amanda Jenkins are, they're a gift from God. I just want to welcome you. I'm thrilled you're here. This is absolutely amazing. Did you have

any idea that it would have the impact?

DALLAS: Well, I will say this, first of all, no, I had no idea. But I'm also not shocked. Here's why. A few years ago, I was coming off a big career failure. My feature film had come out in theaters and it bombed at the box office, and we were left with a very uncertain future. We got to this place of surrender.

JAMES: This is how many years ago?

DALLAS: This was about four years ago, a little over four years ago. I didn't know if I was ever going to make another movie. And I got to a place, and this was what we would call "the secret sauce" to our lives since then, is I got to a place where I was genuinely okay if I didn't make another movie. I'd been doing it for 20 years. I just wanted to be wherever God wanted me. And that surrender for both of us, got us to a place where -- God had led someone to share with us, it is not your job to feed the 5,000, it is only to provide the loaves and fish. So our job right now is to bring five loaves and two fish, God does the multiplication.

So the fact that this is now in every country in the world, and it is blowing up, you've experienced this in your life and your ministry, you're not responsible for, nor can you claim credit for the multiplication. So I'm not shocked that God has done some miraculous things through this show but I certainly didn't expect it either because we didn't have expectations.

We're now on what my wife calls "the manna program." Each day we come out for our daily manna and that's enough for us for that day. What God chooses to do outside of that is up to him. So I'm not shocked but I certainly didn't expect it either.

JAMES: Did you, when you had the loss of film, and moms and wives care deeply, set you back much? Or did it just put you on hold? Or curious search or what?

AMANDA: The bomb? The film bomb? No, it set us way back because I think I worry in life more than he does. I pay the bills. I know what we need. He's like we need money. But I'm like no, I know exactly how much money we need, and I knew we didn't have it. And he really, we didn't know if he was ever going to work in that line of work again. And so, it was really scary and God had to deal with me, had to deal with my fear in that place. He walked me through the story of the Israelites into the wilderness, and we called it "our wilderness walk." That's where we were heading off into the wilderness.

It's funny because now, fast-forward just a couple of years and it is doing so well. I don't know that I want to leave the wilderness because what you experience of the Lord in the wilderness is that daily dependence. And once you see him showing up, the fear is gone. You just know, okay, we're in a bind and this happens now. We'll be in a bind, or we won't know the way forward. It does not have the same effect on me anymore. Because it's like, okay, now, we're going to see what God is going to do. And that only comes when you've been walking in the wilderness and seeing the manna by day and the pillar of fire at night, that kind of existence.

JAMES: Everywhere you look you see that wilderness in people's lives. And that's what you're experiencing but it is what you're not only expressing, you're inspiring people, I think, by showing them Jesus in everyday people that he associated with who we know as Bible characters and disciples and so forth, as basically, biblical historical figures. But you're showing, you're developing them and they're identifying, and they're realizing the same Jesus that was with them is now in every believer, the living Jesus, the resurrected Jesus and you're beginning to show them and they're beginning to see themselves in these characters.

Now I've got to ask you because would you say this birth of *The Chosen* was a supernatural thing God did? And then the way he's developed it and he's guided you, like you're saying daily manna, would you say it is simply a supernatural thing that that's the only way you can express it?

DALLAS: Oh, 100%! I'm not good enough to make something that can be this successful. Every stage of this project has been unexpected. It's been different. We use the Bible verse, Isaiah 43:19, "Behold I'm doing a new thing." Every stage of this project has been a new thing. So from the fact that the show was birthed, was crowdfunded. I did a short film for my church's Christmas Eve service about the birth of Christ. That's all it was intended to be.

I filmed it on my friend's farm in Illinois, 20 minutes from my house, and it was just for my church. And while I was making it, it was just a little short film about the birth of Christ from the perspective of the shepherds, and we were filming behind the barn of my friend's house. I said to my wife when I came home, "I just love telling the stories of Jesus but from these different perspectives."

And so I had the idea for the show. But I was coming off a career failure. No one was lining up around the block to do a show with me or a movie. So when this company said, "Why don't you put this short film out online? And at the end of it, talk about your show that you want to do and ask people if they want to invest in it online?" I thought it was a ridiculous idea. It didn't make any sense.

AMANDA: We'll raise \$800.

DALLAS: I'm like, crowdfunding never works. You're good at doing this when you look into the camera and get people to give but not me. And so, we ended up generating from that short film that I did on a farm \$10 million for the funding of season one, shattering the all-time crowdfunding record. When you ask me, does it feel like a supernatural thing? Yeah! The answer is a little bit, yeah!

JAMES: Is there another barn you want me to go do a show at?

DALLAS: Exactly! Well, and her point earlier about the wilderness is I don't necessarily want to go now that the show is successful, let's live in this successful place and enjoy

that, we want to maintain this posture of --

AMANDA: Well, the dependency that it fostered in us.

JAMES: I can see it all over you. Let me just say this to you because they're probably going to ask. You want to spread this, you get it, can't they just get the app on their iPad, their phone? But also get it where they can just watch it online? Is that a simple thing to explain?

DALLAS: The best way to watch it is you can download the app on your phone or iPad, it is totally free, totally easy. You don't even have to give your email address. So I'm sure there is a viewer who says I don't want to watch things on my phone. I don't even understand how to get an app on my phone. You can also watch it on our website, free and easy, again.

JAMES: The website is what?

DALLAS: *The Chosen.TV*. And then, of course, we have DVDs as well. So there are people, including my parents, sometimes they're just, I prefer the DVD. I can pop it in; I don't have to worry about any technology.

JAMES: Jerry's a little bit more like me; we still look for a cassette to play. Here's the deal. They can put it on the big screen, right? If they have your app, does that enable them to play it, or do they have to go through the Apple TV route? How do they do it?

DALLAS: All of the above. It all works. One of the things I promise is easy and if you don't understand it, your kid or your grandkid can help you. But they invented technology, our distribution partner, where you can pull up the app on your phone and it will connect directly to your streaming device, Apple TV, Roku, Firestick, and you don't even need a subscription or anything. It literally connects to your -- I could go to your house and pull it up on --

JAMES: You can watch it any time you want to watch it. You can watch as many of the programs -- I guess the programs are basically an hour each? Is that right?

DALLAS: Forty-five minutes or so, yeah -- each episode.

JAMES: I want to ask you why. Now here's your devotional book. Like I said, we'll send it. It's online; you can get it. Why did you do the devotional book? What was the purpose of doing this?

DALLAS: So the show for us is not the end game. The show makes you love Jesus, know Jesus better; that's what we believe. People watch the show, they see Jesus through the eyes of those who actually met him. And we want them to be changed and impacted in the same way that those people were, just like you said earlier.

Well, it is a TV show though. It is not the Bible. It is a show, and there are people who watch the show and go, we want to go even deeper. We want to see Jesus even more through these people. So Amanda is the primary writer of this devotional book. And this now gets you even deeper into the scriptures. Each devotional has a scripture that we follow, and it talks about Jesus through the eyes of those people who actually met him. So it goes further than the show does. Because the show isn't a documentary; it's not like it is a history lesson like other Jesus shows. This is like a regular TV show. So this takes it deeper. This takes some of the stories from the show, takes some of the stories from the Bible and this is going to engage you even more with scripture.

JAMES: When I met you a little earlier and we were talking, I said I want to ask you how did the name *The Chosen*, how did that get here?

DALLAS: Yeah, so there are three meanings of *The Chosen* when we were coming up with the title for the show. Jesus, of course, is *The Chosen* one; that's one of the obvious reasons. The other is the Jews, as God's chosen people. It is a very Jewish show. We

show you how important it was that Jesus was Jewish and what that meant. In fact, there are even scenes in the show from the Old Testament, and we show the connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

So for example, really quickly I'll share this. There is a scene in episode seven of season one when Jesus and Nicodemus meet under cover of darkness for the first time. Well, we set that up by showing you Nicodemus's struggle and what caused him to believe that Jesus was the son of God even though he was a Pharisee. But at the beginning of that episode, we show you a scene from Moses and Joshua back when Moses was putting the serpent on the pole. And that connection in John chapter when Jesus says, "Just like Moses put the serpent up on the pole, and all who looked at it just needed to see it to be healed so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Well, Nicodemus didn't get it at the time but later when he sees Jesus on the cross, it's like, oh! That's what he meant.

But we show you that Old Testament scene to try to connect the dots. So the Jews as God's chosen people. And then, of course, *The Chosen* also refers to those who Jesus chose to follow him. The 12 disciples, or the 72 disciples and so --

AMANDA: And by extension us.

JAMES: That's what I was about to say, which is us.

DALLAS: And that's where this comes in.

JAMES: This is a Bible study. But here's the thing, you're chosen by God to be his family and a member of his body uniquely designed to fit perfectly in connection with the other members, submitted to the one head, Christ -- not some religious denominational ideology or religion -- but a relationship with the Father through the Son, and the body looking like him.

I want to just simply say we're going to do another program later in the week, like the day

after tomorrow, and I'm going to show you a clip from series one in that program. What I want us to do right now, I'm going to ask you to do something that might kind of surprise you. If people wanted to help you in any way take *The Chosen*, that one in their life to show others they too are chosen by God to know him as Father in an intimate relationship, to be sanctified and transformed by the Word of God, not become divided by it, but supernaturally -- and then to become supernaturally one in Christ, submitted to the one head as a healthy body, putting his arms around the world he gave his Son to redeem, they're chosen to do that. And so we're going to kind of show them some of those clips so they can see them.

But if people say, Dallas, you don't ask for anything -- and you don't -- you're a giver. You came to share his life. You didn't have a clue where you were going. He said I want to take you into the Promised Land to do what? To give me glory because don't you let the blessings of this land of milk and honey and the blessings of freedom that they bring become an idol. They can get in your way and they can quickly. Somehow that was stripped away and if we would allow his kingdom's purpose to prevail, we could shake this world. And we could do it in short order because love never fails.

DALLAS: You should be a preacher!

JAMES: Well, I'm thinking about it. But you know the highest level is being a servant. He said that's greatest in the kingdom now. That's all these folks. I'm going to ask them to help us feed thousands of children who are dying; just like the people we're feeding in the Ukraine. We're helping people everywhere there is need. It is love that changes things. It is not Pharaoh! It is not Uncle Sam! It is not a government. Never will be, Caesars never work. Your government is supposed to keep freedom in place, protected, not imposing their will. Okay, you got that? That's a message.

Here's the deal if they want to help you, where would they go online to say, Dallas, how do I help you show people they're chosen and show them Jesus? How can I help you do that?

DALLAS: Well, we do allow people to participate in what we're doing. You're right. We don't ask. I don't come out and say, please support, please give. But of course, the only way we can continue to do the show and the only way lives can continue to be changed through the show is if people do pay for it. At least some of them. Many people can't. Right now in the Ukraine, there are over 35,000 people who have the app to watch *The Chosen*. They, of course, can't pay for it. I don't expect them to. We can though.

And so we say when you watch the show on the app or when you watch it on the website or wherever it is, you have the opportunity to do what we call "pay it forward." So it is an optional payment. So when you pay for it, whether it is \$15 or \$10,000 -- we had one person who paid it forward \$100,000! What we do is we tell you this is how many people can watch it for free because you're paying it forward.

JAMES: So where do they go to help to do that?

DALLAS: That's in the app or at TheChosen.TV. Now, if they can't, or if they don't feel led by God, or if their monthly giving that they want to do is what you're doing, that's all great. So if they can't, I don't want them to. I don't want you to pay for the show if you can't. If you can, if God leads you to do it, then do it. And click that "pay it forward" button. We tell you, this is how many people can watch it for free because of what you're doing. We decided when the pandemic hit to make the show free and God has blessed the show infinitely more.

AMANDA: Which took me a sec. I was walking. I was doing good. And then he's like, "And now it's free." I was like, "Wait a sec!"

DALLAS: How are we going to make money if it is free? How are we going to do more? And the day we made the show free, the day we stopped charging people and said it's free and you can pay if you want, our income quadrupled. The next day it quintupled.

AMANDA: And that's just a sweet thing that was between me and the Lord that you only need to hear it one time. But he very quietly and patiently said to me, "Amanda, is gospel is free. I was like, okay!

JAMES: I love you two. You have four children. One adopted?

DALLAS: One adopted. Yep!

JAMES: Folks, I love you. I wish you were in the room with us. If there were a lot of people in the room I'd be looking at all of them. I'm trying to look at you because you are here in the room. God loves you so much. He has so much love he wants to pour through you because you are chosen. Father, please let everybody see that.

Dallas and Amanda, you're going to see Betty. I know you wish she was sitting here. People watch this show to see if Betty will say something. She's just so full of Jesus. And I want to thank you for loving her. And yes, she is doing fine now. And it is because of the way you pray for us that I think we have been able to make it through a challenge, a physical challenge. Would you help us feed some children? You're going to see Betty, when all of the sudden, sitting right here she said something that saved millions of lives. I want you to listen to her. Watch this. I'm going to take you back a few years but just watch.

Begin video clip

JAMES: We've got a quarter of a million, plus an additional 25,000. Take as many as you can.

BETTY: I've got to say this. I don't interrupt you too often, but I feel like I must say this. When we've been over there and seen the children, they line up for a cup of soup, something nutritious. And sometimes we run out before we get to the end of the line. I

would like for you to join the line with James and me, let's make our line longer than their line so there's plenty for them to have.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: When Mission Feeding began over 30 years ago, *LIFE Outreach* and its mission partners were challenged to feed 5,000 starving and malnourished children in Southern Africa. And there were days when the missionaries would run out of food and some children would have to leave the line hungry. Understandably, desperate mothers and children would do whatever it took to try and get a bowl of food.

JAMES: I can't get them to stop pressing in on us so I can even get to the soup. These people are hungry! And this is an area where we've been feeding.

ANNOUNCER: In the ensuing decades, Mission Feeding has been stabilized and expanded into many more areas. Food processing factories were built, hundreds of trucks deliver food across miles of dirt roads and rough terrain. And scores of mission workers prepare the meals to feed the children in remote villages.

The *LIFE Outreach* supporters answered Betty's call to have our line to help longer than the children's line. And as a result, Mission Feeding has helped to save more than 18 million lives and feeds over 350,000 children daily in Southern Africa.

But unfortunately, we are still in danger of running out of food. Unexpected crises like widespread flooding in South Sudan, and drought in Angola has left thousands of children without food and at risk for severe malnutrition. With your help, we once again have an opportunity to save the lives of children in desperate need of food.

As Betty asked many years ago, let's make our line longer than theirs so there is plenty for them to have because we know there is life in every bowl.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: And you know those bowls you saw sitting there on the ground, you see it replaced cans, many of them were rusty cans because you said, "Can't you give those children a heat-resistant bowl? We're seeing them get it and burn their hands because the soup is hot."

It has to be because the water has to be purified by the heating because that's what you have access to. And you said, "We can give them a heat-resistant bowl."

And the missionary said, "No! They're starving to death! They don't need a bowl."

And you said, "We can give them a bowl too." And you did it.

Your love has been an answer to what Betty said. I want the line to feed to be longer and stronger and more numerous in support than the ones coming to be fed. And God answered that prayer. Do you remember how many times I've said to you, if you want your prayers answered, seek to be an answer to somebody's prayer? Do you realize the impact that makes on somebody? I need my prayers answered. What if I could be the answer to somebody's prayers? That's what you are when you feed these children! You put the nourishing, especially designed mix for each nutritional need in that particular area; it changes everything. The United Nations wanted us to make all the food for them. We can't! But you built food factories and enabled us -- 18 million lives saved.

But here's the thing I want you to know. In those same areas, more people have trusted Christ, than lives have been saved. So it's in the 20 million now. So we're winning them to Christ because we're showing them the love of God. See we tell you we drill water wells, we give them Water for LIFE because of the water of life. You get it. You're the oil in the lantern that keeps the missionaries there, keeps them on the field rather than trying to raise funds.

Would you right now go online? No, go get your bank card and use it like a check.

DALLAS: I'm going to do it too! Tell us where to go.

JAMES: All you do is go to *Life Today* and make a gift. Listen to me, you can go online, *Life Today* or you can dial that number that's there. Do you realize that today, maybe 100 or 200 or 300 people may call, while a thousand people are calling to trust Christ or for prayer? And that prayer line is paid for by love.

Call the number, take your bank card, I want you to make the largest gift you can. Think about this. \$100 feeds ten children for the next several months. It is not total childcare, it's lifesaving nutrition. \$30 will feed three; \$50 will feed five. Could you give \$1,000 and feed 100?

We have some gifts to send you. By the way, we'll send you *The Chosen* devotional book too as a gift. But we have other gifts that will bless you and you're going to see them right there. And I know you never give to get a gift. We give to you to give to bless you.

Would you right now please call that number or go online? Do what Dallas is doing? Would you do it, please? Don't wait. If you get a busy, you be determined, you call until you get through. And let's give some children life, and let's tell them about the love of God in demonstration, not just in word but in deed. Thank you!

Begin video clip

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.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your lifesaving gift of

\$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *The Chosen*: 40 days with Jesus. From the creators of the widely popular television drama, *The Chosen*, this devotional invites you to discover Jesus through the eyes of those who knew him best. With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Amazing Grace" sheet music framed wall art. This timeless and well-beloved hymn can be displayed as a reminder of God's grace to you. 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, "Let the Children Come." This beautiful bronze is a reminder to care for children around the world in both word and deed.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: I want you to remember, we are sending this to you for a gift. Lord, I just pray it is the greatest outpouring of love. And I pray a lot of people will get involved with the chosen. Thank you so much. Dallas, thank you.

DALLAS: And I just did it! I literally just went online and gave. And you don't need to send me the book.

[Laughter]

You know the book goes to everyone for any gift. We also know you've got some stuff here for people who give more. But yes, the book goes to everybody. No need to send me the book but I did just give. What you guys have been doing for so many years is extraordinary. And that's one of the reasons we do the show, *The Chosen* exists to partner because when you love and know Jesus more, you want to be more like Jesus and that's

how we can be more like Jesus.

JAMES: Well, we're going to show clips in the next program we do with you. Now you're on your way to do the third season. And then there will be another series. I just pray, I pray they go until you can see the body of Christ clearly in his family all over the world and we look like the perfect Father. Wouldn't that be awesome? Wouldn't it be great to see his dreams come true? He loves to see our dreams come true. He wants your dreams to come true. But he wants you to delight in him so then he directs and gives you the desires of your heart. Father, let that be so for everybody watching.

Thank you so much. Tell everybody don't miss it. Now, tomorrow, I think you'll be seeing Sheila. And then we'll be back. Okay? Thanks for watching. God bless y'all!