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Week 17: Spring Mission Feeding

James Robison

Dallas and Amanda Jenkins

JAMES: I couldn't tell you how thrilled I am. Betty has recovered from COVID. Please know that. We didn't share it. We couldn't handle answering all of the requests. Thank you for your prayers. We're both glad we've been through it. God, for all who are fighting it and loved ones that have lost someone, Jesus, comfort them. Please!

Dallas Jenkins and his wife Amanda are here. His dad is Jerry Jenkins. He wrote the *Left Behind* series with Tim LaHaye.

DALLAS: But your favorite book of my dad's is not *Left Behind*.

JAMES: This is one of the first biographies his dad ever did, *Thank God, I'm Free*. It is when God stretched me beyond the boundaries of my wonderful Baptist world.

Okay, *The Chosen*, we're going to send you this devotional book. *The Chosen* is the most-watched Christian television evangelical outreach in history -- all over the world now. What you're doing, Dallas, you said it is a miracle of God. He gave you the name *The Chosen*, that Jesus is *The Chosen*, the chosen family, the Jews, now, he chose you to follow him and you choose to do so.

All right. What do you want to say? Because we're going to show a trailer. Some people have not seen it. And you've got series one, series two, and now you're about to start series three, and then there will be a series four. And you're going to keep taking this with the hope that we can see the body of Christ look like Jesus.

DALLAS: That's very well said. Season one came out a couple of years ago. This is the first-

ever multi-season show about the life of Christ. There have been movies, there's been miniseries, but this is a multi-season show that allows you to dig in and love the characters, get to know the characters more.

So one of the things I want to share before we show the trailer is that in *The Chosen*, of course, the primary inspiration for *The Chosen* is the Bible; and the primary source of truth is the Bible. But this is a TV show that gives you some back story, some cultural context, historical context, and yes, some artistic imagination that gives you more details about the people who follow Jesus.

So I love God's Word, I believe in God's Word, but the show takes God's Word, and we actually add some back story. We fill in some of the gaps. Because the Bible, when you read the gospels, it wasn't meant to be a TV show, necessarily, it was God's greatest hits to show that Jesus was the Son of God. Well, the show takes the Bible and expands on some of those stories. And so the trailer you're about to see will show you kind of a glimpse of what season one looks like. And you'll see things in there, you'll see Jesus and the disciples, but you'll also see things in there that add some historical and biblical, and cultural context to the stories. And that's what's caused people to relate so much more to these characters.

One point I want to make quickly is we're seeing in mass what you're describing. People from multiple faith traditions are coming into this show and loving Jesus. And again, it is not the religion, it is not the church. We're seeing religious walls break down by the millions around the world, the Catholic church, the L.D.S. Church, people of other denominations saying, I feel like I'm being drawn more to Jesus than I ever have in my life. And the religious walls and church walls are breaking down and that's what's been on our hearts.

JAMES: And he is the way to the Father. And it is the Father's family that looks like the perfect Father -- not the deceiver, the father of lies, the divider, the destroyer, death, the murderer, that's what's prevailing all over the world. And we need to let the love of God that never fails, and God is love, and there is only one good and that's God. So quit looking for some perfect person -- he's Jesus and he is not running for office. So it is always imperfect people, the people that wrote the Bible, imperfect and we don't make them the center. We didn't make Paul, we didn't make

Cephas, we didn't make Apollos, we don't make anybody the center but Jesus. We point to the shepherd.

That's exactly what you do. I've got to ask you this. When you develop these characters and it is not the scenes where you know you read all that in the Bible, but you see this character developing. Do you feel like God is giving you some spiritual insight and inspiration to kind of show you what in fact, okay, so let's just say that wasn't exactly the way it was? But it was typical of the way it is in many lives who started like this and they may have been here, like you may be here but you can be here. That's where he wants to take you.

DALLAS: I want to be very careful when I say this because this is very important. I'm sure you agree with me. Whenever you claim inspiration from God you want to make sure you're differentiating between the inspiration God gave the gospel writers. *The Chosen* is not the Bible. So we're not a replacement for the Bible; we're designed to hopefully bring you closer to the Bible but I am not a gospel writer. So I don't want to claim God's inspiration as though it is biblical.

That said, I do believe, especially when I visited Israel a few years and I was thinking through this show, I do believe God has many times given us, especially in this devotional book and in the show, inspiration to know what's plausible. I'm not claiming that the things that we've added are factual, but it always goes through, is this plausible? And does this honor Jesus and the intentions of the gospels? And if we believe something may violate the character or intentions of Jesus in the gospels, we're never going to do it.

JAMES: And you don't. But see, I think God is supernaturally leading us. He can lead his dear children along. He can lead them on the paths of righteousness. He can lead them to inspirational concepts that inspire not only songs, songs are not Bible inspired, but they are inspired by the God of the Bible, and they carry incredible biblical messages and they impact people where they are with a broken heart or a moment of joy or peace, or whatever.

That, to me, is you are supernaturally being led to show us how this kind of a situation, this kind

of Pharisee could end up in all of these different pictures. This fisherman could end up, this worker could end up, this tax collector -- this leader, this king could end up this way. Let's show a clip from the first series. Do you want to introduce it or do we just let her go?

DALLAS: Yeah, this is the trailer for season one. And yeah, you can check it out right now!

Begin video clip

MARY: My son, they've run out of wine!

JESUS: Mother, my time has not yet come.

MARY: If not now, when?

JESUS: I'm ready, Father.

JOHN: It has begun.

NICODEMUS: What has?

JOHN: Miracles! Signs of wonder.

JESUS: Fear not for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name.

NICODEMUS: You have experienced a miracle, Mary.

ANDREW: I saw him. It was incredible!

JESUS: Our Father --

CHILDREN: Our Father --

JESUS: Who art in heaven.

CHILDREN: Who art in heaven.

JESUS: Hallowed be thy name.

CHILDREN: Hallowed be thy name.

PHARISEE: The man has a following. He's a rogue who answers to no one.

MARY: You asked me before if I knew his name. Now everyone knows his name and I fear for his safety.

JESUS: Throw this down for a catch.

MATTHEW: You think that impossibilities can happen? Overthrow the laws of nature? It cannot be explained.

JESUS: Rise!

[Crying]

[Music]

JESUS: Matthew, son of Alphaeus!

MATTHEW: Yes, this is different.

JESUS: Get used to different.

NICODEMUS: My whole life I have wondered if I would see this day!

JESUS: Follow me, Nicodemus and you'll see more. God loves the world in this way, that he gave his only son.

WOMAN: I'm going to tell everyone.

JESUS: I was counting on it.

ANDREW: Anything is possible. Don't you see?

JESUS: Let's go.

MARY: I was one way, and now I am completely different. The other thing that happened in-between, was him.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Wow! You've got to get it. And here's how you go online right there on your screen, get it on your phone, your iPad, you can get an app for television. Or you go right there, and it will explain it. You want to show us something about one of the experiences that everybody is familiar with, is Nicodemus. It is kind of a short clip. But do you think that would convey to people the power of how just an image in a moment?

DALLAS: Yeah, I think this is a good example of what the show is, which is again, the Bible is the primary truth and inspiration for it. So we get to the scene in the most famous chapter in the Bible, John chapter three. I assume you know John chapter three. You seem like you've read your Bible a few times.

JAMES: Seems like there is a "God so loved" in there.

DALLAS: Yeah, there is. So we have that scene in *The Chosen*. But we don't do it until later in the season. We wanted to show you what plausibly could have happened to get Nicodemus to that place. He was a Pharisee. Most of the Pharisees felt threatened by Jesus, not believing he was necessarily the Son of God.

JAMES: He came at night for a reason.

DALLAS: Yeah! He had to hide himself because he didn't want to be exposed to the other Pharisees for his beliefs. So we show you. And you even see in that trailer just now, Mary Magdalene talking to Nicodemus saying, "I was one way, now I'm completely different. And the thing that happened in-between was him."

Because Nicodemus is saying, "Wait a minute, I know you when you were demon-possessed. How are you so different now? Who did this to you?" And she's explaining it.

So he goes to Jesus and says, "Okay, what's going on here? And why are you here? Who are you?"

And so this clip, it is less than a minute, but this is a clip from the scene in John chapter three that I believe is set up by some of what we've done previously in the season. So this is that scene.

JAMES: Let's watch it.

Begin video clip

JESUS: I did not come to deliver the people from Rome.

NICODEMUS: Then from what?

JESUS: From sin, from spiritual death. God loves the world in this way that he gave his only

son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

NICODEMUS: So this has nothing to do with Rome? All about sin?

JESUS: God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, Nicodemus. He sent him to save it for him. It is as simple as Moses's serpent on the pole. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already.

ANDREW: Have you ever heard anything like this before?

JOHN: Shh!

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Wow!

DALLAS: So that's John listening, the apostle John writing down what's being said. And Andrew saying, "Wait! This is awesome." John is saying, "Shh! I need to write this down!"

But yeah, we were trying to show you the context of what happened and how Nicodemus is thinking like everyone else was thinking, if you're the Messiah, you're here to conquer, you're here to overthrow Rome. And he's saying, "That's not why I'm here."

AMANDA: And it changes the way we read our bibles too. That these, rather than verse by verse and chapter by chapter with the little headings, and all this, that's all fine and good, but it's the idea that these were real conversations and this was new, this was God doing a new thing among his people. So scripture itself comes alive. And that's our heart for the show, we want people to watch the show, but then we want them to go find John chapter three and read it with new eyes and ears where it comes alive a little bit more.

JAMES: And that's exactly what it does. And by the way, that's what the devotional book, *The Chosen* will do. They wrote to just really help us. They've got a chapter here called "Before" and I'm curious, "Before"?

DALLAS: "Before" is the first devotional. And this came from you because Amanda wrote the bulk of this. But talk about what "Before" means.

AMANDA: Well, and I have a writing partner, just for the record.

But yeah, the idea of exactly what Mary said in the clip we just watched, "I was one way and now I'm completely different. And the thing that happened in-between was him." Sometimes we're that articulate, right? Because it is a supernatural thing that occurs.

But you see the befores and the afters in all of these followers of Jesus that we're getting to know through the show. We don't start out in the place that God wants to take us. And so some of us want to wait until we have our ducks in a row and we have life together before we come to the Lord. But he comes to us in the before. And so we all have a before and we all have an after, and that's the idea.

DALLAS: And we know, because my dad wrote about it in the book, you have a before and that's what that --

JAMES: A pretty big before.

DALLAS: That first entry in the devotional is called "Before" because it is about that moment, like what Mary Magdalene had when she was demon-possessed. The gospels don't get into what that was like. It just mentions she was demon-possessed and she had been redeemed. In the devotional book, in the show, in the Bible, we talk about even more than before. And that's when God enters in; that moment before we knew Jesus. And sometimes, we skip over that in our stories.

JAMES: Let me just say this to all of you in the audience. I'd like to send this to you because it is so well written, it is so simple, but it applies.

You know you can read about things and say, that's good. Sometimes you read something that, as I've said to my Pastor Robert Morris, they can discuss you, Robert as a great preacher or great teacher, and you'll be a well-watered garden, they'll discuss all week. Or you can encourage them to do exactly what Isaiah encouraged them to do by choosing *The Chosen* fast which leads you into the before and after an experience of becoming a well-watered garden.

I said, "Robert, we're supposed to send people out as well-watered gardens, not discussing the well-watered garden they just heard."

You say, "You talk like this to your pastor?"

Sure, he's one of my kids. Okay? He worked, he traveled with me, just like Governor Huckabee did. I bought him his first suit. Okay? But he is suited up in Jesus. And that's awesome.

Here's the thing, you need to understand that you are a chosen vessel and you can become the well-watered garden. That is what the whole *Chosen* series is doing to people. They're realizing what happened to them, what happened to John, what happened to Peter -- think about what a mess Peter made. He denied Jesus after saying, "I'm the one person you can count on," he denied him three times -- three times in his hour of greatest need. And yet, he preaches the keynote message at Pentecost.

It doesn't matter how far the enemy has taken you down, in what pit, he will lift you out of that pit and set you on a solid rock. You are a chosen vessel.

Father, let everybody know that. We're not just talking about a series, we're talking about your love for everybody watching! And we can show people your love; in Jesus's name.

Dallas, Amanda, thank you! Thank you for being yielded to God. I want to show our viewers

something that happened through my wife years ago sitting right here. And I've told you, she's recovering from COVID; I've been her nurse. She was in the hospital for five days. I've been with her for two weeks taking good care of her. Made up the bed this morning; she got tired of watching me make it up. Finally, she said, "I've got to go in there and finally get every bed right place." That means she is feeling good.

DALLAS: Nothing will heal you quicker from COVID than having to take over for your husband.

JAMES: There you go!

[Laughter]

But she appreciated it. But here's the thing. Listen to me. Right now you're going to hear from her, her heart's desire and her prayer, and God has answered that prayer through you. Yes! You said, "Wait a minute. This is the first time I've watched." You who watch this show, you're the answer to Betty's heart cry, and you have saved millions of lives. Watch! Because you can do it today. You can be the miracle someone longs for. You can be the answer to someone's prayer. If you want your prayers answered, seek to be an answer to somebody's prayers: Watch closely.

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 do pray. I always try to get you to think big but \$30 is huge to three people -- saves their lives literally. Gives them health and an opportunity; \$55, \$110, but if you could give \$1,000 or thousands please do it.

And we're going to send you *The Chosen*, as well as the other gifts that we've mentioned that you will see and have seen. Dallas, I want to thank you for blessing the whole world by showing them Jesus clearly. Thank you for showing an interest in what you see we're doing.

DALLAS: Thank you. The first time I saw that video that you just played, I'm like I'm giving it right now. I did let you know, you don't have to send me the devotional book.

JAMES: You mean you've got the book?

DALLAS: I've already got it. But yeah, the book for sure, we want to offer people because it does take you closer and deeper into Christ. But when you know and love Jesus more, which is the point of the show, that's not the end game. You then need to want to be like Jesus, and that's what you are doing and that's what your ministry is doing, and that's why I gave right away is because I think when we have the opportunity to we must because that's how we are the hands and feet of Jesus.

JAMES: I hope we stay close to him and one another. I'm glad you're kind of living in our area

now. It's great. You're going to like this area. Texas is a pretty good introduction to the Promised Land.

DALLAS: Well, we're in Texas, we're filming in Texas, we film the shows in Texas, and of course, a lot of Texans already believe Jesus lived there anyway. So it is a perfect place to film, a perfect place to film *The Chosen*.

JAMES: Well, he wants to live in every heart and every life everywhere and you're helping to share him just like *The Chosen* is. Thanks so much for watching *Life Today*. Encourage your friends to watch. And to share *Life Today* every day. God bless you and again, so glad to have you on.

DALLAS: Thanks for having us.

JAMES: Thank all of you for watching.