

7/12/22

Week 29: WFL

James and Betty Robison

"God has a Plan"

JAMES: It is no exaggeration that it is a joy for us to be able to spend this time with you. I've been praying really for an extended time this morning. I've been praying now for several days for all of you who watch *Life Today* and all of you who help us put God's arms around the overlooked, the unnoticed -- what Jesus called "the least of these." And so to come into your home and talk to you is a real blessing to us. What we're going to do today because we know -- I hope you didn't miss the program where I talked about right now how serious times are. I suggest you go online and watch it. It aired yesterday. But the hope of the future of freedom and life on this planet, which is God's garden, rests on the shoulders of God's family, the church, the body of Christ.

But when we ask you to touch the unnoticed and the least, and you do it, we need you to understand that you're just as important to us as those overlooked. You're just as important to God as those we point your attention to. And when we come into your home, and let's say we talk about water or food, in our minds, you think to understand this, in our minds we're thinking about water and food for you, spiritual water and food. And your concerns may be indescribably grave and serious, even deadly, destructive -- we care.

And Betty, we know that people see the love relationship we have. We will be married 60 years next year. We may have a 60-year anniversary celebration. Maybe we'll have another what we call Bible conferences, I think you'll like that for the 60th: 60 years in ministry, 60 years in marriage. But you see us, and you say, okay, you've got three kids. We know one is in heaven. We understand the weight there. We pray for you, and we know only God can comfort you. And we know you have 11 grandchildren, ten of them married, and you've got 14 great-grandchildren

-- and I'm sure more on the way. Okay. Our family is taking serious being fruitful and multiply.

But you say, James, y'all are happy. You have a lot going for you. You probably don't understand the way we live. Let me say this to you. You don't have a clue where we came from and what we went through, especially on my end. I'm the product of a rape! A hospice nurse is raped by the alcoholic son of the man she is caring for. She tried to have me aborted and the doctor wouldn't do it. I'm here. But I want you to understand that as I look back on the journey, I feel very deeply led by God to show you there is not a single challenge, there is not a single difficulty that God can't lift us out of and above -- no pit, no ditch, no place of pain.

I want you to just journey with me. Betty, when my mother didn't abort me, she put an ad in the paper and asked for someone that would love a little boy to come to get me. A pastor and his wife came; it was your pastor and his wife. You vaguely remember that they had a little boy in their home. I was there until I was five. And you have a recollection of that little boy being taken away. I think you remember because I remember your mother told me, and many others that they remembered the pastor and his wife asking people to pray for the little boy they thought was theirs. Do you remember all that?

BETTY: Mm-hmm.

JAMES: You didn't know I was going to come walking back into the church but into your life, right?

BETTY: I didn't at all.

JAMES: But there's no question that church cared about that little boy that was taken away. Here's what I need you to see. My mother would come and take me for a visit with her. Brother and Mrs. Hale that I called mommy and daddy, would say, "Now, you have a mother and she's going to come to take you for a few days." And sure enough, Betty, she would come and get me, and I'd go with her.

Here's what people didn't know, and I had forgotten this until I'm sitting in Charlotte, North Carolina with some of the business people there and with Cathy Hendrick of Hendrick Motor Sports. Cathy Hendrick had lost her husband and her twin girls in a plane crash. For some reason, she was very interested in our ministry. She asked if she could go to India and see the needy. And indeed she did. It was the time that the movie that won the best picture of the year, *Slumdog Millionaire* was out, which showed the horrors of what's happening to little children in India.

We're sitting at the table; I'm at the head of the table because I'm speaking to this little group of business leaders. Cathy is sitting right to my left and she said, "We went to the railroad track," and you saw that in *Slumdog Millionaire*. The people saw that academy award-winning movie, it was horrible about poverty and how people would take those little poor children and cut their hands off, blind them, and make them beggars. Cathy said that we walked down there, and we looked at those little children and they looked up at us and they said, "We don't think anybody is coming back to get us."

Boy, the minute Cathy said that, it was like a dagger, Betty, that went right through my heart, and I lost it at the table. I said, "I need to apologize because I just saw something I've not seen since it happened." When my mother would take me for a few days, maybe three days, maybe four days, she would take me while she worked and leave me with some people I'd never seen. And Betty, I saw when Cathy talked to those little children, "I don't think anybody is coming back," I saw my little nose pressed up against the screen wire, we used to have screen windows, and windows that raised the window didn't have a screen to keep mosquitoes out and so forth. My little three and four-year-old nose was pressed up against that screen for hours wondering if anybody is coming back.

Boy, it hit me, I told Cathy and the business people there because I said, "Cathy, I've seen your heart broken and you've started helping us love people all over the world." Thank you, Hendrick family, thank you, Cathy. I said, "I think maybe that's the reason I have such a heart for people that have been left or people that are so needy."

Betty, you know how my heart breaks. You've been with me all over the world and you've watched God just move me into a setting and it was like his love moved in, didn't it?

BETTY: Absolutely!

JAMES: And you watched that spread. It was like it got all over you, the mother's love for all these children. And I think it is all over our viewers, don't you think?

BETTY: Absolutely! It truly is. You have joined our hearts with the heart of God and been able to touch these precious little ones all over the world where we've had the opportunity. I call it an opportunity and privilege to go and serve and see what the real needs are. You've joined us in that and I thank you so much.

JAMES: I want you to see that my journey got rough. When I was five years old my mother came and the Hales, the pastor's wife thought they were going to get to adopt me. They had the papers, and my mother just had to sign them, but she refused to do it.

I didn't know all of this but one day she walked into their house, and she said, "You're going with me now."

I notice that Mama Hail was crying and Pastor Hail was crying. So I ran and I hid under the bed. I can remember it like yesterday.

My mother grabbed my foot, and they had a hardwood floor, and I can still remember my little nails dragging across the floor. She said, "You're going with me." And I walked out with everybody crying.

And my mother had packed this little suitcase, and this is the little suitcase. It's a very tiny suitcase. And my mother said she put everything I had, I needed, to take with me. I don't think there was even a toy in it. I carried this little suitcase, and my mother had a great, old, big trunk-like bag, and it didn't have wheels on it, and she was dragging it. And she told the pastor and his

wife, and I remember them trying to thrust money in her hand and she said, "No. We're okay." She wouldn't take it. She said, "We're riding the bus to Austin," which is like 150-160 miles away, a three or four-hour drive back then. And she said, "We're going to go on the bus."

Well, we went on the bus from Pasadena, southeast Houston to the west side of Houston and we got out. We started hitchhiking. I spent a lot of time sitting on this little suitcase. And I can remember only two of the rides; people felt sorry for this lady and her little boy. But we road in a cattle truck on feed bags, and a mail truck picked us up, which is against the law for them to do that, but they did; and I rode back where the mail was. I thought it was nice when I rode in the cattle truck sitting on the feed bags and looking at all the cows behind us.

But we got to Austin, now please stay with me, and we lived in Austin for ten years. I just need you to hear this. Because what I experienced is what far too many people experience. I never had a father, we moved 15-17 times in ten years. None of the streets or none of the houses faced a street unless it was where mother was caring for an older person. All of our little places were on an alley, two of them were on dumps, salvage dumps, and we just had nothing.

And Betty, I've told the story that I went to work when I was 12 at a grocery store -- 12, with the University of Texas students, I'm managing the store at 12. The stock department, the produce department, the dairy department, and the manager said, "You'd manage meat too, but you've got to be 18." He said, "Someday when you grow up, you can manage a store like this." And my little 12-year-old mind said, "When I grow up, I could own this store."

Now you say why are you telling us that, James? Because I'm telling you I did not look out from my impoverished situation where I was the minority, white was the minority where I was much of the time. I mean we were really poor, primarily Hispanic, some black, I never understood why people didn't like each other because of race. I didn't understand that because I cared about people, even a little poor boy.

But Betty, I didn't go to work when I was 12, I went to work when I was eight going door to door collecting coat hangers and taking them to the cleaners. If I remember correctly, I could get one

penny for two. And I could buy myself some of those All-Star bubble gum things. I could buy red soda water. I was working. But Betty, I became an entrepreneur because I went up to a lady's house one day and she said, "Come with me." And her garage was full of coat hangers! So, man, I was in business. And I'm telling you, I was rolling! And somebody else said, "We have an attic full!" But I couldn't get in the attic unless they were there and let me in. But I could go in the garage anytime. I went to work at eight!

Oh my! I keep telling people, look, learn something from the birds. The government doesn't take care of the birds, God does! He takes care of the ants and the bees. And he says, learn from them for heaven's sake! Birds teach their little ones to go to work early. And nobody beats the birds to work. Today, people don't even want to go to work. Pharaoh is going to take care of us. Stop it! Stop the nonsense!

I'm telling you a little kid that had nothing, didn't look out, and hate everybody that had something. I just looked out and saw freedom. I'm trying to say to everybody, please, no matter your circumstances, I didn't have a father pulling for me. I didn't have anybody saying, "Way to go!" But God had a plan.

Betty, you remember that in my difficult situations the alcoholic man that raped my mother came back into our lives and I thought I had a dad. He turned that little broken home into hell. Tried to kill my mother; thought he had when she passed out. And I, in self-defense nearly killed him. He went to prison for seven years. I left. I came to Pasadena.

BETTY: Thank goodness!

JAMES: I moved back in with the pastor and his wife, and I met you. Tell people what happened when we got to be friends.

BETTY: Well, you know when he came there, I had not gotten to meet him, but I knew of him. And I knew he was living with our pastor and his wife, and I loved them so, so dearly and respected them. When he asked me if he could take me home on a Wednesday night after church,

I said that should be okay. That's pretty safe. He's living with the pastor and his wife, so he did. We got to visit, we got to know each other a little bit. We were only 15 so we couldn't do a whole lot, go a whole lot on dates. I think you took me home that night at 15 and didn't even have a driver's license.

JAMES: It was because the pastor said, "I want James to go with that sweet girl in our church. I know he can drive, I've watched him drive so I'm going to let him take her." Pastor, we all forgive you. [Laughing] But that was a special night to me, Betty.

BETTY: It was a special night to me, and you were pretty cute so I was pretty interested and checked you out a little bit.

JAMES: Let me tell you what happened after we -- I was a poor kid and had no home. I'd been taught girls were for something you use. And that night, I brought some things up to her in a conversation and I said that's the dumbest girl I've ever met. She doesn't know anything about anything. But she was the sweetest, purest girl. Betty, when I got home, this is the truth, I ran into the pastor's home and back to the bedroom that was mine. I'd never had a bedroom of my own; I'd never had a tiled bathroom counter. I fell down by the bed and I said, God, I met a pure girl. I met the purist, sweetest girl. Please, God, take care of her.

And I told you after, I liked you before you liked me. I told you when you did decide you kind of liked me, I said, stay really like you are because I said I may not always be so godly. I may be putting a move on you. By the way, she's got more defensive moves than Chuck Norris, I'll guarantee you.

But Betty, God led our lives together. I'm telling the people this story today to say to you, and by the way, because I loved Jesus, you were a Sunday School teacher, but you came to Jesus.

BETTY: Yeah, I've got to say this really quick because this is part of God's journey he had both of us walking on. We didn't even realize it so much at the time but when you did move there and live with Brother and Mrs. Hale, he started going to church a lot, and so we started dating. But I

look back and I see now that God used a young man that didn't grow up in the church, and wasn't around Christian people to be a good influence on him. But God used this man to lead me to Jesus, a girl that grew up in the church, did all the things right but didn't have that personal relationship. So I thank you that you allowed God to use you. We must not get ahead of God. We must allow him to take us on the journey. He doesn't want us to miss anything or to miss anyone that he might want us to influence for good and to lead them to him.

So let's don't get in a big hurry to get ahead of God but walk in his steps and let him lead us.

JAMES: Here's what I want you to know, that no matter how challenged your life's been, no matter how difficult it's been, he's bigger, he's greater! He'll never leave you nor forsake you. You can't push his arms off. He won't let go. He won't hold you captive, but he'll hold you with unconditional love. I want you to receive that. God hold them close. Let them know you've got them.

Now listen to me. He can lift you out of any defeat. He'll forgive any sin. He wants you to know that I want to walk with you through that valley however dark it is, however deadly, however painful. I want to care for you. I'm praying for you. You have no idea how much God has put every viewer on our hearts. Betty was a church girl who didn't know Christ. I was christened in the Episcopal church and didn't meet Christ. We have seen millions of people come to Christ who grew up in religion. If you don't know Jesus right where you are, say, Jesus, you died for me. I believe it. I receive you. Religion and church won't do it. I receive you, Jesus. I give you my life. I receive your life. Tell him that. Tell him that.

I wrote a book and a Bible study called *Knowing God as Father*. If you said I want to know him as Father, call that number or go online and say would you send me that Bible study? I know Betty would love for you to have her testimony that she wrote about in *Free to Be Me*. This is fabulous. Look! We're offering some devotional books to those of who you will give just a cup of water to a thirsty person.

I want you to let us know, we want to know the Jesus you've talked about personally. Let us

know that you trust him. Let us know that you're going to let him use you no matter how challenging and how broken things may have been.

Father, I pray for this great release of your healing power too, and to those who are watching. I'm going to show you glimpses around the world of people who need water. We're going to complete 350 water wells with your help right now. We're going to begin to finish that emphasis. You may be able to drill a well or part of a well. I want you to watch prayerfully even while others are calling, committing their life to Christ. I want you to watch and see how you can be a miracle in someone's life. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: The far corners of the world frame a beautiful picture of God's creation and the unique people created in his own image. And as you visit different countries, you're sure to see many different cultures and customs.

But even in the midst of this diversity there is one commonality shared by all: The need for water. We need water to grow our food. We need water to care for our animals. And we ourselves need to drink water to survive. But unfortunately, many people around the world don't have access to clean water. The only water they have available is contaminated and it's the children that have suffered the most from waterborne diseases.

Open captions

>> My daughter died from an infection and diarrhea. Our water is contaminated but it's the only source around here.

Open captions

>> Everyone who lives in this village has gotten sick from the water. We have never had an option for clean drinking water.

Announcer: Just as the problem of contaminated water is the same around the world so is the

solution. You can help drill new water wells in many different countries and provide clean water to hundreds of thousands of people.

Clean water changes everything. Clean water saves lives.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: We're drilling right now with your help in 20 nations. Please hear this. I'm not going to take a lot of time. You're going to give a cup of water, could you give a well of water? Betty and I do it every time we emphasize it, twice a year because we asked God more than 20 years ago, to let us drill a well every time the missionaries point out the need. And he answered that prayer. He has for many of you.

If you can give part of a well, \$1200 or \$2400, three people, one other person join you, we've got a well; \$48, 10 people water the rest of their life; \$144, as an example, 30 people water the rest of their life. Would you right now go get your bank card or go write a check and make it to LIFE? But get your bank card, call the number, or go online and say here it is, I'm giving life today.

We have some gifts to send you that will bless you. I want to tell you something, these coasters: Faith, hope, and love, there are four of them here, they are absolutely beautiful. The devotionals are just beautiful -- seasonal, all four seasons, four daily devotionals. And then the beautiful bronze with Jesus and the children, "Let them come to me."

Many have come to Christ today. You may not be able to get through on the phone because people are trusting Christ. You be determined to get through or you just put it in the mail. But try to call us, tell us it is coming because we need to know. Thanks so much for doing it. Thanks for sharing life.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Across the globe, hundreds of thousands of lives are lost each year to waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is too late.

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 of any amount, we'll send you the *God's Daily Promise* devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily scripture, inspirational message, and room to journal your prayers and insights from God's Word.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Faith, Hope, and Love" coaster set. All four beautiful sandstone coasters come in an elegant natural wood holder and artistically display the words of First Corinthians 13:13.

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. 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 can't look at this and not think about the miracle. I've been on a miracle journey. Betty and I are going to try to share some more with you about this journey we've had together because we care about your journey. Thank you for caring about the lives of others that are truly the least of these. And Jesus said, by the way, if you want to know who the sheep are that will be

with me forever, they notice the least.

I love you! Many of you have trusted Jesus today. Now let's share him with the world. Thanks for watching. Thanks for sharing life!