

10/17/22

Week 43: Rescue LIFE

James and Betty Robison

Kayla Stoecklein

In the studio

JAMES: I'm glad to get to come into your home. Please just focus your attention here. I'm James. This is Betty, and she's beautiful. We have a beautiful guest, and she has a book titled *Rebuilding Beautiful*. And although she is beautiful, you're going to find out the beautiful she is talking about. If you could only see yourself the way God sees you and the potential for magnificence and beauty beyond anything you had ever dreamed of. I think that's what Kayla wants to help with. Imagine losing your pastor/husband to suicide. That's a rough start. How do you rebuild beautiful?

Well, Kayla Stocklean?

KAYLA: Stek-line.

JAMES: Stek-line?

KAYLA: Uh-huh.

JAMES: I have to help people know how to say "Robison." They say, Robinson, Roberson, Robertson but hardly ever Robison. So you and I know what it is to help. Say it again.

KAYLA: Stek-line.

JAMES: That's interesting.

KAYLA: You move some of those vowels around.

JAMES: Yeah, just looking at that, what heritage or background?

KAYLA: I think it's German.

JAMES: I was going to guess that. Kayla, what happened when your husband—for you to find him the way you did?

KAYLA: So little over four years ago, I was living my dream life. I really truly had everything I could have ever asked for and more. Married to my dream guy, we're leading a thriving and growing ministry in southern California at a church called Inland Hills Church. Life isn't easy but it is beautiful and meaningful and full of purpose.

And then in 2017, he got sick. I really believe he burned out after many years of running fast and running hard and taking over a church at a very young age and watching his dad die. We had been through a lot. So it all kind of caught up with him and he started having these panic attacks, and these panic attacks led to a depression diagnosis in the spring of 2018. We were doing everything we knew to do to support him and help him. He was seeing a therapist, seeing a psychiatrist, taking medication, taking time off work, on a sabbatical, and spending time with mentors. You name it, we were trying it, and we thought he was getting better.

So he was released to go back to work in the Fall of 2018, August of 2018, and hit the ground running. Gave two powerful messages on mental health; talked about depression, talked about suicide, gave out the suicide hotline number, and quoted stats from the NAMI website. Like out of anybody he would have known where to go for help. And then headed into the third weekend, had a really bad day at the office. We all know what it is like to have a really bad day at work, and his mind was still very fragile, much more fragile than I think he realized, and I think we realized as well. And so the following day while we were away from him trying to make the arrangements and check all the boxes,

we knew that he needed more help so trying to get a guest speaker for Sunday and tried to maybe find an inpatient place for him to go.

While we were away from him for just a little bit, he attempted suicide. And it was an absolute blind side; the worst moment of my life finding out that that happened. And so he was rushed to the hospital, and they ran a bunch of tests and delivered the most horrific news that there was nothing they could do to save him. So on August 25th, 2018, he took his last breath. And with that, I took my first in this life that I never saw coming as a widow at 29 years old with three little boys who were two, four, and five. So it's been a journey.

JAMES: Oh God! First of all, I want to say thank you for your grace that Kayla can sit here, and my heart breaks. But Betty knows when I was so exhausted and burned out in my mid-30s that I didn't want to live. And I told the whole world. A lot of people said you tell too much but I told where I was. And prayer and God's delivering power did for me what didn't happen for Kayla's wonderful husband.

Now I want you to take us on the journey of *Rebuilding Beautiful*. Tell us what you're learning, what you've learned that would inspire the book, and what you want people to hear not only from you now but when they read the book which I pray you will.

KAYLA: So those two words *Rebuilding Beautiful* were born in this conversation that I had with one of my friends. I was sitting on my front porch, on my front porch swing, and I was talking to her on the phone. I was explaining to her how I had this beautiful life. Like I said, I had everything I could have ever asked for and more, and it is like that entire life died with Andrew. And I was handed this brand-new life I never saw coming, and I so deeply wanted to believe that this new life, even though it looked vastly different than before, could still be beautiful too. I said the words out loud. I said, "It's as if I'm *Rebuilding Beautiful*." And when those two words came flowing out of my mouth, I knew they were so much bigger than me. I knew they carried a powerful message of hope, and I knew they were going to stick around for a while.

So after I wrote my last book, *Fear Gone Wild* I was asking God what's next. And I kept hearing those words in my ear, *Rebuilding Beautiful*. The person that I thought of as I was writing this book was the person like me that's in this life, in this life that you never saw coming. Maybe the suicide happened, maybe the loss happened, maybe the divorce happened, maybe it was the death of a loved one, maybe it was the death of a dream, maybe 2020 happened and you had this beautiful dream and you thought you knew how life was going to go and then it came crashing down with the pandemic.

I think there are so many transitional seasons of life that we find ourselves in where we look to the future, and we have no idea what it's going to look like. So that's the person I was thinking of when I wrote this book. And like, what have I gone through and what are the lessons I've learned? It's been four years since my husband passed away. What are these lessons that I've learned?

So I broke down the process into five processes and the five processes are embrace, heal, explore, dream, and live.

JAMES: All right. I want to pause one moment. I just want to say this to you. We're here for you. You know that we're always going to ask you to put loving arms around those who feel unnoticed, overlooked—truly the least of these. You know that. But you need to understand that you are just as important to us as those people we're helping. And we couldn't help them, we could only weep over them if you didn't enable us to help them.

What I want you to know is that Kayla is here for you. I don't know what it is that broke. I don't know it is that came in devastating damaging effect but we're here and she's here to help you. And I believe you may want to get this book. But I want you to hear her and we're going to let her expound on some of these.

Betty, what are you hearing already because you can see the beauty that is beyond physical skin deep? There is a radiance about Kayla.

BETTY: Well, you see the amazing work of God in your life. And it doesn't always, to me it's come quickly for you, four years. It's still fresh. We lost a daughter when she was 40 with cancer, leaving three children behind, and it's not something that you just snap your fingers and it's different. I mean it's different; but it is not gone, it is not well. That hurt lingers for quite a while. But it's also a process where God says let me take you somewhere you've never been before; that's me walking right with you through this. You don't get over it, but God walks through it with us.

I feel like there are so many people, especially with everything that's been going on with the pandemic, with all the confusion and all the things that are happening in our world today, there is a lot of hopelessness. I think what you're sharing can bring great hope to those that are down in the valley right now and who need some hope to reach up and grab hold of God.

JAMES: That's really why we're here. So you need to understand, we wish you were right here, and we would try to get God's arms around you. Of those five points, take one or two of them and develop them a little bit for our viewers.

KAYLA: So I think the first step for anybody that wants to rebuild a beautiful life, that has this big pain and they're wondering, what do I do with this pain? I'm stuck in this valley, I'm stuck in my grief. I feel overwhelmed, I don't want to pull back the covers and step back into my life again tomorrow. I've had those moments where I didn't want to pull back the covers and live another day. It felt overwhelming to think about living another day with the pain that I'd been handed.

So the very first step is to embrace and that is stepping towards our pain with courage. It is making the decision to heal. It is going to therapy. It is sitting with community. I think one of the greatest ways we can embrace our pain and heal our pain is to share it. And when our pain is truly shared, it can be shared and lifted.

I've had friends that have been able to sit alongside me and sit with me and truly share in my pain. I had a girlfriend at the very beginning after Andrew passed away, and I had just gotten done putting the boys to bed and I came out to the living room, and I totally collapsed. I fell on the floor, and I was weeping. All she did was come over to me and lay on top of me and weep with me.

I think so often for those of us who have friends that are going through a difficult time, or a loved one that is going through a difficult time, we don't know what to do. We feel like we have to show up with an agenda. We feel like we have to show up with all the right words to say. And it's like, oh, my gosh, your presence is enough. In that moment with my friend, all I needed was her presence and her presence spoke more than any words she could ever say.

So embracing our pain, embracing community, and then embracing healing. The next step is healing. It's going to therapy, it is sharing our pain. It is choosing to look ahead. It is choosing to ask God, what are the dreams that you're planning in my heart? What's the vision that you have for my life? What's the vision that you have for the next 5, 10, 15 years? God, what do you have for me here?

Okay. I've embraced my pain, I've healed my pain, what does life look like from here? For me, a lot of that has been just being willing to show up and try. I'd never written a book before and now I've written two. In my journey too, we've recently moved a couple of years ago. We bought this fixer-upper house and so a big part of this *Rebuilding Beautiful* journey has been fixing up our house. And it's been handing my boys hammers and we've torn out walls, we tore out a bathroom, we tore out the kitchen, we ripped up the floors. And it is like in those moments when I'm sitting in those spaces and I'm looking at the two-by-fours around me and I'm sitting on the plywood floor, this is what I'm doing. Not only am I rebuilding my home but I'm rebuilding my life. And it takes a stripping down. God strips us down. He strips us away from all the things that we think that we need and it is like oh, my gosh, all I need is him. All I need is him.

And going through what I've been through has been that realization too of like I couldn't have gone through this without God. I couldn't have gone through this without my faith. And Andrew's death has expanded my relationship with God. It's expanded me. It's given me eyes to see his love and his hand in everything in so many ways that I never had seen before.

JAMES: I want to get all of you just lean in here. When I talk to men, and you said it so well, she just came and laid on you. She came and wept with you. Jesus, through Paul, told us we rejoice with those who rejoice. Be sure you can do that. Don't covet what anybody has, rejoice with them. Pray that it doesn't become an idol and a distraction but a blessing. But also, you weep with those who weep. She needed that.

When Betty and I lost our daughter, we knew a lot of people were praying for us. We knew there were people who wept with us. We didn't need somebody coming and giving us a sermon. So I tell men, we most often need a shoulder to lean on, they don't need a sermon. Ask God to make you a shoulder to lean on. So let me say to all of you, here's a shoulder. Lean in. We're all here to get God's arms around you.

Do you see that prayer line there? It is an 800-number, it's paid for by love. We will pray with over 1,000 people today. We may pray with 2,000. Do you know why they're calling? There might be 50, 75 of them call and say, we want to set the trafficked free. But the majority are calling to say I need a shoulder. I need arms. Let me tell you whose arms you need, God's arms. While you're asking God to get his arms around you and lean in on his shoulder, what you're doing now, when you may call, you'll find a shoulder to lean on, somebody to love you and pray with you.

Remember that phone call is paid for by love. See all of our support base is the love of God expressed so we get his arms around the world he gave his Son to redeem. That's what we're doing. So please know that.

Father, there are so many right now that are hurting big time. And they heard, and they

need this rebuilding, and I know some are saying, I can't afford a therapist. Lord, help them find a shoulder. And they got one with a phone number right there, they're going to find somebody cares because we care, we love them. And Lord, I'm asking you to start healing, in Jesus' name.

Share in the next four or five minutes something else in the book that you think is critically important that they're going to hear in those five points. But share another point that you think would be meaningful to our viewers today.

KAYLA: So there was a moment on my rebuilding journey, and it was after I had chosen to move. Really, the choice to move was such a powerful decision for me and my boys because the community that we lived in before the church was everything. Everybody knew who we were and everybody knew our story so if we would have stayed there our story would have been told for us for the rest of my boys' upbringing and the rest of my life as well.

So we chose to move just an hour towards the coast and really, it was taking back the power of our story. It was taking back the power of my story for myself and my boys and for them to be able to tell their story on their own terms, when they want to, who they want to, how they want to.

After we moved, I had this moment where I was standing in my living room, we had put up the Christmas decorations, the fire was roaring in the fireplace, I had put the boys to bed, I had just cleaned everything up and I said these words out loud, "I chose this." And it was this powerful moment because when Andrew died it felt like life just happened to me. And it was at this moment where I realized for the first time, I chose healing. I chose to rebuild my life. I chose to rewrite our story. I chose to take back the power of our story. And it brought me to tears. I said it out loud and it brought me to tears.

And I was crying in my living room like oh my gosh! I could have stayed. I could have stayed camped out in the cemetery is how I describe it. I could have stayed camped out in

the cemetery. I could have stayed trapped in the victim mentality but instead, I chose healing.

So I just want to say for anybody that's listening, healing is there for you, and it is a choice to choose to rebuild your life. It is a choice to embrace your pain and move forward with your pain. And it doesn't diminish your pain. Your pain moves forward with you, and if you let it, your pain can be one of the greatest teachers in your life. I know my pain has been one of the greatest teachers of my life. It's given me eyes to see people and have empathy for people and have compassion for people in ways that I would have never known before.

JAMES: I know you can see the glory and grace of God all over Kayla. It is just there; sitting here with you, you can just see it. It's in the book. She's gifted. And she's sharing the gift with you. I hope you'll go online and get the book. We'll send it to you if you'd help us rescue a child from sex trafficking.

Betty, we're just going to pray together now for God to heal every broken heart. Start this healing process, Lord, God that you've done in us when we lost our beautiful daughter. Lord, there is so much pain. We want you to start this process, miraculously, but now, in Jesus' name.

Let me just remind you, there is a phone number there. That's a prayer line paid for by love. Many times you will connect with somebody who's experienced the same thing you have. You're going to talk to somebody who will agree with you and pray with you, and you ask God to show you a shoulder you can lean on.

God, I pray you'll raise up shoulders, maybe a neighbor, somebody at church, I pray they will find a good church. And then, Lord, I pray everybody listening will become a shoulder for someone to lean on; in Jesus' name.

Kayla, we're going to let you watch Sheila Walsh right now; so gifted, such a blessing.

She has the greatest final stage of her life was missions. And boy, she's had an unbelievable life. I think this is one of the most powerful words I've ever heard from a very gifted communicator. But I want you to know, listen to me now, everything you hear in Sheila's heart is in God's heart. And then you're the answer to the concern she shares, to the need she addresses, to the desire of the perfect Father. Watch and know you are the miracle. Yes, you are. Watch.

On the mission field

SHEILA: I just wanted to explain why with this particular little girl we're not showing her face. She's 11 years old so we want to do everything we can to protect her.

So when you were just nine years old, something terrible happened to you one night. Why don't you tell us about that?

Open Captions: My dad is in prison and my mom ran away with some man. So I collect cans for food money to feed me and my brothers and sisters. Then one night... [Weeping] a guy on a motor vehicle grabbed me and took me to a bar. I was locked in a room and many different men would come in. If I refused to be with the men, I was beaten.

After a year, they let me out of the room, and I ran away. Right now I'm free but I still have to go out at night to pick up cans. I still have to buy all the food for my family. I'm scared that I will be taken again and made to go back into that room.

SHEILA: I'm horrified by her story. And tragically, she is not the only one—there are so many girls. And here's what I think. If we don't defend her, if we don't say no to those vicious predators, and trust me, they are very well organized, and they're very well-funded so we've got to get organized, we've got to get funded. It is time to let our righteous anger rise to the surface. There are some things that we can say well that's not good, but this is evil. This is absolute evil from the pit of hell, and we cannot abandon these beautiful children who are longing to know that there is at least one person on this

planet who cares for them. I want her to know it's you and it's me and we're going to fight for them, in Jesus' name.

In the studio

JAMES: I want to get God's arms around little girls like that. You realize that Betty and I have been all over the world, 40-50 countries, putting God's arms around children like that. We've built the largest *LIFE* center, as far as we know in the world with people who were in Hollywood. And they watched us on television, and they got a burden. She sold a seven-carat diamond ring for money to go. They sold everything they had that they'd served Hollywood with and moved over there. We found them renting houses. So we said we'll help you rent houses. What do you want to do? Our dream is to do this. Well, we helped them build Destiny House. We helped them build the most magnificent place. But then we've done this all over the world. And when I say we, it is the viewers of *Life Today*, Betty. It is the people that—we didn't even know if we could show them this sex trafficking. Somebody said we don't want to see anything about sex. But you were the ones that insisted on it.

Betty, our viewers said, we want to help them! And you have literally sent us to the ends of the earth to put God's arms around people. Think, Betty and I will be 80 years old next year. Okay? We will be married 60 years next year. I know, you don't look anything like it, I may look like it but you don't. Here's the deal. Love has carried us. God's love through you has sent us with the gospel to the ends of the earth to put God's loving arms around the broken. And right now we've got an opportunity to rescue more children perhaps than ever. Here's one that just out working trying not to get caught again. That's what Destiny House does. That's why we established these homes. Many of the young men fighting for Ukraine's freedom grew up in our children's homes, our *LIFE* centers from the time they were little children. Those are your children all over the world!

I'm asking you right now, Betty, I'm praying for the greatest outpouring we've ever seen. That you would go and say, we're going to rescue them. \$128, think about this, will

rescue a child. We've got a matching gift to double it to where it rescues two; \$1280 will rescue ten, now 20!

Betty, would you please encourage our viewers to do everything they can?

BETTY: I pray that you will listen to the heart of God right now because I feel like he is saying this is an opportunity, this is a way, and you can make a difference in a child's life. Can you imagine that little nine-year-old girl and the devastation and the fear and the hurt she felt? Her childhood was taken from her. Her life of being a sweet little innocent girl was taken from her. And now they're threatening so many more like her.

Please join us. Let's reach out, give them hope, and give them a place to stay in safety and to take care of them and keep them away from this kind of danger and devastation. Please join us right now.

JAMES: And Betty, with the help of our viewers we're going to be able to get her into one of those places. It's already happened. And we can do it for so many.

Father, I pray everyone watching, God, I pray as many as can, will give \$128 but know that anything they can do will be doubled, it will be matched. God, please magnify your love through our viewers, in Jesus' name.

We have special gifts to send you to say thank you because we always want to bless you. You're blessing so many miraculously, you're becoming their miracle. I want you to get your bank card, use it like a check, or write a check and make it to *LIFE*. Dial that number where many are calling for prayer. If you get a busy, you say, I'm going to call until I get through. Or go online and you make the gift God put on your heart knowing it is going to be matched and it is going to be a miracle—perhaps a miracle for many. Thank you so much.

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, and restore young lives and give them a future. With 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 "I Hear His Whisper." Each entry in this beautiful 365-day devotional will encourage you with words of comfort, joy, and love as you encounter God's heart and hear his gentle voice.

With a gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive "What Does Your Jesus Look Like?" This captivating book by sculptor, Scott Stearman shares compelling stories and beautiful images revealing how we can be the image of Christ to a watching world.

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 hope you feel like you've put your arms around that little girl. Sheila, you did a great job, so anointed. And you did a great job if you reached out and touched a little one. By the way, if you couldn't give and you pray, God, please! God's hearing your

prayers.

I hope you'll rebuild beautiful. We can help a lot of little children like that little girl rebuild beautiful. If you'd like to have this book, you can get it online or in the bookstores, or we'll send it to you if you'll just touch some of those little children with the love of God.

Thank you. Thank you! If people wanted to contact you to come and speak, where would they go online to find you?

KAYLA: KaylaStoecklein.com is the best place.

JAMES: Do you go and speak if you get invitations to the right places?

KAYLA: I do. Yes! Thank you.

JAMES: There you go. Thank you so much for watching. Thanks for sharing *Life Today*, not just watching it.