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Week 47: Fall Mission Feeding

Fall Mission Special #1

James and Betty Robison

John Yeatts

In the studio

JAMES: You know sometimes I have to wonder, how do I open in a way for you to understand how important this moment is. First of all, to be able to bring *Life Today* into your home in whatever situation your life faces, and a lot of people in Florida got a heaviness and they've had it for weeks. People all over the world have heaviness. You may say, James, you don't know what's going on with me. Well, I'm going to tell you this though. Betty and I care, and if we knew we would want to bear the load; just like we believe those of you who watch us would like to help bear our load. Frankly, we actually think it is one reason why when you see two people who have seen a very serious situation, a need that love can meet, you actually want to be a part of lightening our load, brightening our day by lightening their load and giving them life. That's what you do.

Well, you're going to meet one of our staff members who has been with us now for a long time working with pastors. And I'm telling you, he is just a blessing. His name is John Yeatts. You may have met him, you may have seen him. He's been to the mission field but now he is the mission director. And he was almost like taking a great man working with great pastors and shepherds seeking to encourage them and lighten their load, so to speak, and help them be a better shepherd to better lead the sheep that God loves so much and wants to love through them, and they love. Well, John's been doing a great job. Now then, he is our mission director. And he's just come back from the mission field where he's been many times. But now he's the director so he's looking at things a little differently, and you're going to enjoy talking to him.

And I just want to say this. You are, and Betty, you and I say it when there is nobody listening,

the viewers of *Life Today* share life as effectively as any people we have known in the 60 years now that, about to be married 60 years, 60 years of ministry, you're the most amazing people! And from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you.

John Yeatts is here. John, would you agree that the viewers of *Life Today* are some of the most amazing people on the planet?

JOHN: Absolutely, James. You know I've thought about it and we've talked so many times together as we've traveled. The viewers that have supported *LIFE Outreach* all these years are the hands and the feet of Jesus to answer the prayers of other people. You've made that statement many times, "If you want your prayers answered become the answer to someone else's prayer." And we have.

I've spent 18 years serving our partners. We have the greatest partners on the planet. I'm so grateful that they have continued to make so many sacrificial gifts. It is not always the wealthiest that make the biggest sacrifices and we have so many people, James, and I'm so grateful.

JAMES: You know you can know a lot of people will ask the question because I know whether it is Sheila Walsh, or Billy Graham's daughter Ruth, or whether it is Tammie Trent, or whether it is Beth Moore, people always said, does it really work what we're doing overseas? And the answer is what?

JOHN: Absolutely! Without a shadow of a doubt, it is working.

JAMES: Love never fails. And when you support that love never fails. We're going to see you with a woman with a broken heart. Now, Betty and I understand what it is to have the broken heart of a child being gone. Let's look in on this scene. Look in because here's the deal, you can stop this pain. Watch.

On the mission field

JOHN: I made the most important decision of my life in 1989 when I chose to trust Jesus as my Lord and Savior. That same year James and Betty Robison made the decision to start Mission Feeding, our longest-running outreach at *LIFE*. That decision has helped save millions of lives from the death of starvation and malnutrition.

Recently, I've traveled with our mission team to Angola where a multi-year drought is disrupting countless lives. Often, with heartbreaking results.

Open Captions: I am Maria. I'm 24 years old. I had two children, a boy and a girl. The girl is five now. My son was three when he went into the ground. He was severely malnourished. My boy was very friendly with the other children. He was very active. His sister always asks about him. She misses him a lot. It's hard to think about because I still have my other child to care for.

JOHN: As I walked up the hill, I noticed children are playing with sticks and whatever little things they can find to make little corrals for make-believe animals. And it reminds me of your story, James, of when you were a little boy and you used sticks to make a little ranch; believing and praying that someday God would do something for you.

This young mother lost her son to starvation, to the lack of food. We have the opportunity to come into a place like this and bring food and help to these villages here.

Father, we just come to you in Jesus' name. Work a miracle. Work a miracle through your people.

[Foreign language]

Can you imagine her praying and comforting me?

[Foreign language]

In the studio

JAMES: John, she could see your broken heart. It's not hard to see. I think you would agree with me and Betty that if we went and kept watching the death cycle, earlier in that piece it talked about he went into the ground, that's the grave. And we were seeing thousands of little children buried, just little tiny graves. It just was more than we could bear. If we had not known what love could do -- you've got to understand when we first found them and we were watching how fast they died, and we sold everything here we could sell to start saving thousands.

We started with like we could take care of 5,000 but we had to sell a lot of stuff because I didn't know, Betty, if the viewers of *LIFE*, I knew in our Baptist churches and most churches I'd been to that if you didn't want a crowd just have a prayer meeting or a mission conference. Nobody showed up. So I didn't know if anybody would help. But boy, did you help! And did you take us beyond even Mission Feeding into water, and rescuing trafficked children, and on and on. It's you. You saw the least of these the way Jesus wanted us to see the least of these. And you said we won't overlook them. We will clothe them, we will give them water. And Jesus said, "You're doing it to me."

And by the way, John, he made it very clear, if you want to know who the sheep of my pasture is, they're the ones that notice the least. And they don't just notice, they touch them. And they're touching me. And our viewers do that.

Okay, John, you're missions director now. So you're going and you're seeing needs, and you're seeing the miracle of love. It works, doesn't it?

JOHN: Yes! Absolutely.

JAMES: It doesn't fail.

JOHN: Absolutely.

JAMES: But you're also seeing other needs, do you find yourself wondering, can I tell them?

Can I tell James and Betty what I'm seeing? Will people be able to handle it? What do you think when you see all the tremendous, let's say need but also we have to see it as an opportunity to get God's arms around these situations and these brokenhearted mothers, and stop the brokenhearted reaction of one after the other dying; and give them hope, give them their children -- give their children a future. I mean are you reluctant to come tell us? Are you reluctant for us to tell them or do you feel like all they've got to know is opportunity?

JOHN: James, it is a very interesting thing because people ask you, "Well, how was your trip?" And the only thing I've been able to say is it is the oxymoron of life to be able to experience the greatest sorrow and the greatest joy in the very same moment. And every time you're there, that is what you're experiencing. And it would be overwhelming if I did not have the confidence that our partners would respond.

There's never been a moment that I have questioned whether or not you would respond, or our partners would respond. And that is what gives me the confidence to go from each of those villages, the ones where we're working and the ones that we still need to work in. It's just -- you touched on it a minute ago and I just want to say I was recently having dinner with Ann Pretorius. She said, "John, when James left here the first time, *LIFE Outreach* needed everything it had. It wasn't in the best financial place. But James told us that we would begin to send a check and for 34 years *LIFE Outreach* has never missed a payment."

Thirty-four years our partners have provided. And I know it's because they have confidence in your integrity and confidence in the integrity of our mission partners. They see it evident when you watch the show. And I'm just -- I'm in that tear between asking for more help and saying thank you. And I guess it is with that tension that you just look at each of you and to our partners that I know so well, and I've been in their churches, their homes, their businesses, at their weddings, and their funerals, and I just say thank you. Thank you so much for so long. Wouldn't it be easy to meet a need once in a while? For 34 years we've been meeting this need and I'm so grateful to have the opportunity to serve this way.

BETTY: And the difference, John, is too, you hear that mother's story. That little three-year-old

boy didn't have to die. Had we gotten there and known, we could have been a part of saving his life. I think that's what touches your heart so much. You have got God's heart. When you see a story like that you say let's give more, let's help more so that we can reach more before they come to that point of death and before that mother has to experience that heartache.

So thank you so much. You always come through. God always speaks to your heart and says, let's do it.

JAMES: Our viewers say yes to what they see, not just as need but as an opportunity. Like I said a moment ago to put God's arms around the overlooked because God doesn't overlook them. But we as the body of Christ, as believers, as the church are the arms and hands of Jesus who extended those arms and hands to die for us. But now in resurrection life in us, he wants to put the arms of God around the broken, the unnoticed, truly too often the least of these, but not to you.

John, I'm believing right now because you found a tremendous need. You found other things that you saw that you want to discuss how we can best approach those challenges so we can tell our viewers here what will be effective because we don't do something that is not effective. We don't support missionaries that weren't sent by God and anointed, which means they're divinely gifted and enabled to do the job and they have literally lost their life to find it in God's kingdom purpose to rescue the perishing and care for the dying. That's what they're doing.

But they couldn't do it did they not have the support. That was the thing that was so amazing in the relationship. They said you're the first -- and this is 30 years of people saying this on the mission field -- you're the first national and even world leaders that just came here and planted yourself in the midst of the suffering and saw what the missionaries were doing and how they would even bring their children with them into the very pits of hell into the darkest places on earth and give the brightest light. And you made it possible for us to stay here. You went back and got the oil for the light, for the lanterns, and kept us here.

But then to go for another 25 years to the third world, to the darkest places on the planet, how in

the world do you do that? Because God's love sent us. But you didn't send us just with a broken heart, we had the broken heart. You sent us with arms of sufficiency and love. You sent us as the miracle that they were praying for, longing for, hoping for, and you became that miracle. I've said it so many times, you can be somebody's miracle today. Have you ever wanted one?

I just feel impressed right now, God, somebody right now is saying, boy, I sure need one. Okay, God, I'm asking you to deliver. And if it is somebody you can use to touch that person right now that I'm thinking of in my mind and my heart, but Lord, there are hundreds of people watching right now saying I need a miracle. God, I really believe you led me to say this.

Now listen, here's what I believe he led me to say. You need a prayer answered, ask God to make you an answer to somebody's prayer. Do you need a miracle? Ask God to let you be somebody's miracle or the way for that miracle.

Father, I'm praying that you'll raise up more people than we've ever seen in one day who would say I'm going to be somebody's miracle today. I'm going to be the answer to their prayer. We're going to give their children food to eat. We're going to give them hope and help; in Jesus' name.

John, we've watched you with a mother that lost a child. You're sitting here with a couple that lost a child. Okay. It is unbearable pain; you live with a broken heart for the rest of your life. But I want you to listen to this mother. If I'm not mistaken, she lost five.

JOHN: Lost five—Mandolina.

JAMES: I want you to listen to this mother. Then I want you to listen to a mother's heart, I want you to listen to that Father's heart. Please!

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: *Mandolina is weary. For years she has battled an enemy that thrives in the*

environment she calls home. Despite her most desperate efforts to protect them, five of her children have lost their lives.

OPEN CAPTIONS

>> The sickness that has taken my children is hunger. I had to sell everything in my house just to help my children survive. But we are still struggling, and we have nothing left.

ANNOUNCER: *The most recent victim in her home was her four-year-old daughter. A dearly loved girl whose greatest joy was helping her mother. Mandolina clings to those memories even as her grief threatens to overtake her.*

OPEN CAPTIONS

>> She was so young, but she always wanted to help me with everything. I remember us cooking and cleaning together. I cry when I think of her. All we have left is suffering and hunger.

ANNOUNCER: *In the face of such a relentless enemy, Mandolina continues to fight all the while caring for her children who have fallen ill because of malnutrition again and again and again.*

OPEN CAPTIONS

>> The future is so dark.

ANNOUNCER: *This shadow of death has loomed over Mandolina's family and so many others like them for far too long. With your help, we can provide a daily bowl of food for all the children in Mandolina's village. The darkness can be rolled away, and a bright future can be revealed.*

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Would you be the miracle for that village? John, did you go on this trip as you have on

other trips where you saw the death cycle as serious as what Mandolina was talking about? And where literally hundreds and even thousands have died? And then you saw where Mission Feeding moved in and in six months to a year, you would actually visit that same situation and see nothing but joy and the sounds of singing and peace?

JOHN: Absolutely. James, we spoke to Isak on our last Mission Feeding special and he told us a story of a village where they were literally eating nothing but fruit and worms. I'm so happy to report to you that Mission Feeding has gone to that village and alleviated that grandmother's fear of dying. Her last statement to us was if you don't come back, we will die. And we have alleviated her fear.

That's the work of the gospel. That's the work of Jesus, the hands and the feet, wrapping the arms of God around a dying world.

JAMES: Well, that's the love that doesn't fail and that's what you've expressed. And Betty, we're asking everybody watching right now to feed three, five, or ten children, \$30, \$50, \$100. We have beautiful gifts. We have the beautiful *LIFE* Planner, and you can't imagine how much you're going to enjoy this. And then the beautiful pen set, as well as the beautiful bronze with Jesus holding the children. That's what you're doing.

Betty, I know that at this particular feeding time, there is crisis all over the world. Times are tough for people and when things get tough for the average person a lot of times for the people that are just on the edge, they go over the cliff, so to speak. But we can stop that, and it means a sacrifice, a lot of times, for everybody. I'm believing everybody watching is going to do all they can to save as many lives as possible today by making the best gift they can.

BETTY: I believe you will too. I believe your heart has been deeply touched. You know we can always find someone that is in a worse situation than what we might be struggling through, and we just have to look to God and say, God, show me a way that I can make a difference in someone's life. And you found that way many times through this ministry. So we thank you very much.

Please, offer that love again. Let's help these mothers be able to enjoy their children for many years to come and not see them die right before their eyes. Thank you so much for what you do.

JAMES: You know I talk about a \$100 gift saving ten children's lives. I don't know how stretched you might be financially. Lord, I pray you'll ease that burden in every family, every couple, every life. But Lord, show them the way; in Jesus' name.

Is there something that you could say I don't have to have that? And that will give ten children food. Or I don't have to do that -- I'll skip a meal. I won't go out to eat. He says when you give to others, when you meet a need and you release that river of life in giving, because of your heart he will make it possible for you to continue. He says he will make it possible for you to continue to meet needs. That's an amazing promise! He didn't say he would make you rich. He didn't say it would pay all your bills. He said he would enable you to keep the love freely flowing.

That's a supernatural work of God. It's supernatural love that leads you to go right now to the phone, get your bank card and use it like a check, go online, use your bank card, and make the best gift you can. If you make a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail because we have to let the missionaries know, you can go to that village. You can feed those children. Would you do it right now, please? Thank you so much.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Across the continent of Africa, children are suffering and facing severe malnutrition. Lack of rainfall and severe drought has led to one of the deadliest food crises in 40 years.

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 *LIFE Planner* bound in soft-touch leather. This planner will help you in your daily walk with space for you to record your appointments, goals, inspirational notes, and prayers.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the scripture pen set. Perfect companions to the *LIFE* planner, these beautiful wooden pens are inscribed with scripture references to keep your heart focused on God's plans for 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

On the mission field

JOHN: So I'm in Angola and we've been here several days, and we've discovered the tremendous need with mothers who are still losing their children because of the devastating drought. But today is a fabulous day. It is a day of celebration because Mission Feeding is in this village. Mission Feeding is in this school. And as much as a great day it is that we get to serve, I still have in my mind every mother we have talked to this week who's lost a child.

And so I'm asking you, do not delay. Go to the phone right now. Go online right now, whatever way you give go and make your best gift today so that we can make sure that other villages have days of celebration just like this village rather than days of mourning where they're having to bury their children.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: You know, I'm holding this bronze of Jesus holding the children because I'm praying that if you could take ten children in your arms, boy, that's a load! No, when you put arms of love around them, and you lift them up out of the cycle of death and give them a chance at life, and you introduce them to Jesus, the life because you've demonstrated him. I tell you what, that lightens and brightens your day. So you help us all you can. I believe you will.

John, if we get to work with people that enable us and our missionaries to do his will magnificently and they are the key. It's just like how shall they preach unless they're sent?

JOHN: That's right.

JAMES: See, how do they believe unless they hear? How do they hear unless they preach? But bottom line, how do they preach unless they're sent? The bottom line for the greatness of God is those who send it. God bless everyone who does that as they bless others. Thank you so much for watching *Life Today*. And above all, thanks for sharing *Life Today*.