

Week 14

3/30/11

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Thank you so much for joining us. Well, it is "Wednesdays with Beth" and I always look so forward to that. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: Well, I'm excited to hear Beth talk about... really how anybody's life issues can actually become a story that is fit for a song. I feel like sometimes my life story must have been one of the typical western songs; just some of the lyrics there is always crisis. Well, really the fact is that no matter how tough the journey, God can actually turn any difficult situation into a beautiful song. Let's welcome Beth Moore. I know you're going to enjoy her. Be sure you tell your friends about Beth being here on Wednesdays -- "Wednesdays with Beth." Here she is!

Begin video clip:

Beth: If we're going to have a story that turns into a great song number six is this: it's got to be a story where the only main character is God. The only main character is God himself. That's what he's after. Will we give him, with our lives, a stage set to show himself? That's what he's after. I want you to notice something with me. I want you to see at the very end of that chapter, it says in verse 22 that Barak came in pursuit of Sisera and Jael went out to meet him. "Come," she said, "I will show you the man you are looking for." So he went in with her and there lay Sisera with a tent peg through his temple, dead.

Isn't it a relief that he's just like dead and instead of just sitting there with his temple like praying and stuff. He's like been there with a tent through his temple and he's dead. And on that day God subdued Jabin the Canaanite king before the Israelites. And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin the Canaanite king until they finally destroyed him.

Now I want you to notice something with me about this because remember that as Deborah is called in Judges chapter four, she is a prophetess, a judge in Israel. So when we see her go, first of all, to Barak and she says to him, "Did not God tell you, you are to go and take on this enemy." And he says, "Well, if you don't go with me I'm not going to go." And she said say, "Well, okay." And I don't want you to miss her words back to him because this is where we settle on them. Verse nine: "Very well," Deborah said, (I'm in Judges four) "I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman."

Now stick tight with me. I so hope you were part of this series several weeks ago, and that you wondered what might be up with that statement because it does not sound like something God would really enormously bless if you know him very well. That kind of response back, well you know what, you don't have to do it alone but if I go with you it's going to be a woman that's going to get this victory instead of you. Only, isn't it strange that here in the end of the chapter, it's actually not Deborah that brings the victory in, it's Jael that brings the victory in. I studied and studied and studied one commentary after another and one brought up a most important question. Now I'm going to say this to you straight off the pages of the commentary, paraphrasing it just a bit, "What if Deborah, the prophetess, was right about God delivering the honor to a woman but she was wrong about which woman. He presents the thought that perhaps Deborah really believed at that moment it was going to be her. But oddly, God did bring it about through a woman but it did not turn out to be Deborah as the woman. It turned out to be Jael instead of Deborah. Now others will say, and just swear to the death, "No, she was a prophetess, she knew exactly who it was going to be." I'm not so sure about that because it seems to me it is God's way to protect us from our own arrogance and our own swollen ego just when we get haughty and think, "Then I'm going to get this victory and you're not going to get it." Just about the time we cop that kind of attitude it's not going to be us at all. He might say to us, "You know what? You're going to be right about the victory but you're going to be wrong about the one who brings it in." Anybody getting this with me? Because I found that to be profound. Okay, I'm going to do exactly what you said, I'm going to bring it through a woman. I'm going to let that be the words of a prophet, you're going to turn out right, but the difference will be it will not be you as that woman. I just want to make sure I present to you the story in such a way that you know this is one commentary's take on it. Another might say something totally different. But I found it to be, after just a little bit of history, a couple of decades of walking with God in scripture, some days up on the path, other days down in the ditch, but it sounds just like God to me. Anybody else? Just like him to me! I have found recently the most interesting scripture. I want you to jot this down, this address, and you can look it up

later. It's Proverbs 25:27 and it comes out of The Message, so it's going to be in wording that's going to be quite different from many of your other major translations. The first of it, it's just like the rest of the proverbs where very often it says something that doesn't seem like it goes with the part before it. There are maxims that are going one right after another in almost a spitfire kind of fashion. The beginning of it says something that may or may not appeal to us in this moment. It says, "It's not smart to stuff yourself with sweets..." Now aren't you glad that that is not what we're learning in our present lesson? I don't even want ... no telling what you're eating on the other side of the screen. I'm so sorry, I didn't even mean to go there but since I have to tell the whole verse I needed to tell that first half. "It's not smart to stuff yourself with sweets..." This is the part I want you to hear. "...nor is glory piled on glory good for you." This was mind-blowing to me. I want you to think about how much we misunderstand glory after glory to be just the thing God would want for every single one of us. Think in our parenting – if you're parents I want you to think for a moment. If you ever had a kid that perhaps was on the debate team or was in some kind of sport you will notice in our prayer life for them, and all our intercession we constantly pray for them to win. Am I saying that truthfully? We want them to win! We want them to always get it. If they're up for some kind of vote for some kind of school office or position we want them to get it and we constantly think that what would be the best thing that could ever possible happen is for them to get that championship, for them to get that award, for them to always get exalted. We want glory upon glory and we think that's what's going to be good for somebody. You know, that's just part of normal parenting. We want our kids to be happy and fulfilled but the word of God says that glory piled upon glory isn't good for us. That's just as applicable to an adult. It doesn't take a kid in high school for us to understand that. In business, in the area of your biggest giftedness you're going to find that you can't master it. That just about the time you think you're really great at this you blow it. I need to know somebody else knows what I'm talking about. It's been one thing about it, if you're any kind of, particularly since God is so faithful, if you're in any kind of Christian work where you do communicating. Whether it's speaking or teaching or counsel, whatever it may be, there's no way to master it. I've tried over the years to figure out what is the formula for God's spirit really falling? I want to figure out how would we create, and some of you that may be in an area of worship leading or some kind of singing, something that's up front; you may know exactly what I'm talking about. Where you get to take part in something where you sense the spirit of God falling, you begin looking for a formula for it. And okay, if I would do... and I think what did I do last time when I really sense that? Did I fast that time? Well then, I am fasting from now on. Anybody know what I'm talking about? And listen, as much as I have to get out there and teach, I would never eat if I just decided that that was the key. If I would just fast. How long did I pray? Anybody? Anybody? Now this is any victory. You

may not be able to relate on exactly what I'm talking about with teaching but in any area of your giftedness, of your victory, where your strength really seems to lie, I want to ask you, do you look for what makes it work best? And I want to always set that formula up. I want God to work for me, not just through me. I want him to work for me! I want to figure out how he'll always do this thing. I want to follow A, B, and C, and get him to do it every single time only you can't get a formula for the strong anointing of God if you try. It will not work, you cannot master it. You cannot! God is just God. And he's so faithful. One of the things I love best about him, if he looks through our bull... anybody know what I'm saying? He knows the motive. And sometimes we don't even know it. Sometimes we feel pure at heart when he knows, "You know what? You're really just looking for me to make you look good, and me to make you seem gifted. And really, I'm not real into that. I'm really the one getting the glory here, not you." And that's why his word says, "Glory upon glory just isn't good for us." So you need to know that when you blow it, and I need to know that when I blow it, when it just this time does not go well. It's not because God hates us. It's because God is faithful to us and he knows good and well we cannot handle that. We will take credit. It is nature's way. It's the human condition that if we are set up enough, if we get consistently good enough at something we will start taking the credit for it and we will cease looking to God for it. Anything that we think we can master. Anything we can grab hold of and we can find a formula for sooner or later we will become more addicted to the formula than we are in adoration for our God. Am I telling... Listen, if I'm lying I'm dying. Am I telling you the truth here? He knows it. He knows it. He's got us figured out. And even when we think our motive is pure, and it may be, he's already knowing you know, the best thing I could do for you is not let this one come out exactly the way you want it because one of the most important things I can use in you, child, is your humility. One of the most important things you have to offer me is your pure need that you know you cannot do it, you know you've got to have me to accomplish that. That's what keeps that ball rolling and nothing else. Deborah needed to know that. Barak needed to know it. You need to know it. I need to know it. He's not going to let us cop an attitude and get arrogant in a situation because somebody else can't get their spiritual life together and believe God and then is going to turn around and bless us with his glory. We're not going to get it. We're not going to get it. Not because God does not like us and not because God is mad at us. But because God is faithful to us. God is faithful to us. He knows how much success we can handle and he knows when it's just about time for a good defeat. That that defeat would turn into our victory. Anybody stepping in that with me? Anybody going through that right now? Anybody thinking that God has left you because suddenly in an area where you have been so successful you're just not real great at it right now? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody, just everything you touched turn to gold? You just had the touch at work. One position after another, one

promotion after another and now you've just been sitting still all this time and everybody else is just passing you by. What did you lose? I can tell you this: you did not lose God. You did not lose God. But maybe, somewhere along the way we lost our consciousness for our great need of God. There has to be times when we come face to face with our own self-centeredness and then the victory comes.

I think that's what happened with Deborah. I think God let her be right! I'm going to give this victory to a woman. I surely am! Because Barak did not believe me but I need you to know it is not a gender thing, it is an availability thing. This is a woman right here in Jael that knew who the true enemy was, I'm going to let her take him and I'm going to let her peg his head to the ground. As grotesque to us as that is, that is exactly what we have got to do with our enemy. We are never going to win a battle we refuse to fight. I want you to see the next one; the next one is number seven. Number seven is this: If we're going to have a story that is fit for a song, we've got to have a story displaying the exploits of many. Our true successes will always be in tandem with other people. We have a natural tendency in our great need for significance to be the one. We want to be the man. We want to be the woman. But God's going, "I'm about bringing a victory to a people who know who brought it." We're going to find that if we're going to have a really great story, it will display the exploits of many. God will give us opportunities to have be the one who is the strong person in the group and then he will give us the opportunity to be the one who is suddenly weak. You'll never get to just maintain the place. We want to always be the leader, we want to always be the one everybody else looks up to but he does not let us get away with that. Truth be told then we're the one in great need. We're the one humbled before the rest of the group. We're the one that can't pick up our own heads. That's the way it's got to be. Now remember, Judges four is a story but Judges five is the song. So in Judges five it tells the same story but it tells all sorts of new details in the poetry version that we didn't get the first time around. So it tells of all sorts of groups of people and what they brought to the mix. Now all the tribes were called to come forth to fight but a number of them stayed behind. You've got your non-participants and you'd have it about midway in verse 15 all the way down through 17. The question is asked, why didn't you come when you were called? So they're the non-participants in the body of Christ, the non-participants in what God is doing in our culture in this present season. We've got people who just don't respond to the call. But then we've got our participants. And all through the chapter it tells of the exploits of the various tribes and what they did to bring about the win and to bring about the great victory that God had for them. It took all of them! It wasn't just one. There were some in leadership but it took the whole entire army to bring down that enemy force. I want you to think that through for a minute because I've had something happen here recently through a friend that's really

got me thinking about it. I have a buddy who is just one of the dearest people in the entire world to me. She is one of my co-workers and she is private by nature. I tend to rarely have a thought that I do not share. Anybody understand what I'm talking about? I'm just one of those people that if I'm talking to you, I'm probably sitting on you. I'm just -- I can instantly become best friends with the person at the checkout at Kroger. I just have -- I can be in the ladies' room forever at a restaurant and come out and Keith will go, "Where have you been?" "Well, I got to know someone in the next stall." You know what I'm saying? Anybody like that besides me that just immediately get to know people? So I'm kind of like that. But my friend is much more private than that and she is very, very anxious to pray about your needs, but she does not want to bother people with her own. She so believes in the way God works that she says that there are times that she so knows that he'll impress upon her co-workers hearts when she needs prayer that she says, "Sometimes," she says to God, "Please don't tell them until I do." I love that! I love that!

[Laughter]

Have you ever felt like I feel like everybody knows right now but I'm not ready to tell them? Well, that's the kind of thing she is talking about. And she said that she realized that in keeping some of those things to herself, now I'm not talking about things that should be kept to ourselves but I'm talking about the humility of saying, "Boy, I'm just in a battle with you! Things aren't going well at my house right now." Not bringing any dishonor to anybody, just saying, "We could use prayer. We could really use some prayer." Are we apt to do that? And she said, "It really convicted her that she needed -- that part of why they couldn't get a breakthrough was because God wanted her to just go forward to her co-workers and say, "You know what? My family needs your intercession right now. We're going through a difficult time and we could really use the help." So she is just the kind of person that wants to be there for somebody else but doesn't want to drag them down. So she came to us and she said that the moment she divulged and said, "My family --" because she is among the strong ones and now it was her turn to be in need, "My family needs your prayers." She said, "Beth, as I live and breathe," because all of us were sitting around her and there were about 15 of us that work together. She said, "Beth, I heard swords slice through the air in my spirit." She said, "It was like every one of you went... [shwewhhh!] I mean just pulling out the swords for one another. I just got chill bumps all over me. I'm asking you, do you let people do that for you? Did you do it for others? Or do we get so absorbed in our own worlds that we miss the victory? Because when we truly have a great story, it's not just been about us! The main character is always going to be God and a truly great drama is going to have exploits of many. You're going to be able to go, let me tell you about this person. And let me tell you what happened here. Let me tell you, I don't

think I would have made it without so-and-so in this particular challenge. It's got the exploits of many! That when you were at your lowest point somebody else came along and had the strength to help you up. That's the way it happens, when we pull out our swords for one another, when all through the heavenlies they can hear the sound of swords slicing through the air as we stand up with one another and we say, "I'm willing to do battle with you. I will stand right beside you and if this sword freezes to my hand, I will continue to attack in the name of our God with the Word of God."

End of clip

James: Boy, I tell you what, Beth, I long for the day when we are really putting our swords together and we learn together to fight the right enemy, instead of having what Jim Hylton, our friend refers to as "wine skin wars" and all kinds of conflict where we often take the swords up against one another. Or we fail to take up the right sword, the sword of the Lord to give us the strength to slice our way through life and to cut through the greatest challenges and really to stand up for and with one another. This is one of the things that I think our viewers enjoy doing as much as anything, as well as even listening to the word and hearing it taught or shared in testimonies. I think you really do enjoy knowing that we are going to be able together to demonstrate the truth of God's word and the power of God's word and the reality of God's love. It is not just a story out of history, however accurate it is about God's love, it is a reality demonstrated through us today. And when we can rescue people from the pit of defeat or despair or destruction, and right now to literally rescue precious children from the sex trafficking where they are taken and used as slaves, you're going to hear even the fact that a child can be betrayed by the closest person possible -- hard to believe but hey, God the father can rescue the perishing and we do that together as an expression of his love. Watch closely. Listen though to the heart of God as you see the hurt you can heal.

On the mission field:

>> At 12 I was sold by my mother to a man who kept me locked in a room and raped me every day for a week. After the first time I begged him to let me go because it hurt so much. I went back to my mother because I was so afraid but all she asked was, "Did he give you any more money?" A girl receives hope from her mother; I have no hope.

Jeanne: I want to be the mother. [Weeping] She's been diagnosed with H.I.V. I don't think it is too late. I think there is lots of time for love. And there is a lot of ways for us to show that to her. This girl is worth rescuing.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Boy, you can't imagine the images that flash through my mind. I led Jeanne Rogers, who was weeping with that girl to Christ when she was a teenager. I was a young man. Jeanne is now a grandmother with ten beautiful grandchildren; three sons that are just incredible Christian witnesses. And Jeanne is holding that girl, and Betty, she said, "I want to be her mother." Her mother sold her. What I heard in Jeanne was the heart of the father, God's love saying, "I want to put my arms around her." And really and truly what Jeanne is saying is we want to give girls like this, women like this, we want to give them a home, we want to have take them out of that pit of destruction and bondage and we can do that. And viewers like you built the most incredible *LIFE* Center there in Thailand and we're establishing incredible *LIFE* Centers in other parts of the world where we're taking people out of the sex traffic and we can literally rescue a child like that and a girl like that, Betty, the average cost is \$128, that's what it takes. We're asking you to help us rescue as many as you can. What goes on in your heart when you look and you see something like that that's happened where a mother has in desperation and for whatever reason sold her girl into slavery like that?

Betty: You know, just like Jeanne said, there's enough love for her too. I think of the words to a song, an old song that says "Oh, what love that Jesus died for me." He died for these children too. He gave his life for them and he loves them. And we have the opportunity to reach out in that love and show them how much value they are to Jesus. And I think that's a great opportunity, James. Let's put our arms of love around these children and let them know that someone cares.

James: You know when we first came to our viewers with the sex trafficking issue, we found it almost like it would be embarrassing to show you what is really going on. And we were really a little bit concerned about how you might respond. Maybe you would just turn it off. But you know what you did? You said, "We can help." Ladies, you're incredible. Mothers, grandmothers, and all the men that care, you're amazing! The way you've reached out to help us rescue thousands and thousands of children. Right now we're asking you to make a gift to help us share an opportunity, literally to

rescue life. Did you know that for \$1280 we can rescue ten of those precious girls and children from the sex trafficking? Put them in a beautiful home, a setting and teach them a way of life and go back and minister to the families and the settings from which they were either sold or came. Many of them went off thinking they were going to learn a trade and get a job. That's what they were told, and then they were taken into bondage and slavery. But love will set them free. But we need your help not only to build *LIFE* Centers but to sustain them and to give the opportunity to literally rescue some. Would you help right now? Would you make the gift God put on your heart? Take your bankcard, use it like a check, or write a check, make it to *LIFE*. Or you can go online and make the gift God put on your heart. We have some gifts to bless you as you are literally helping us rescue lives. All over the world where people are trapped, literally trapped in the sex trade and being used, help us rescue them. Please do it! Do everything you can to help.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Human trafficking... it's hard to believe it is happening! But at this very moment innocent children, many very young are being sold and forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable and someone must save them! With your support of mission rescue life you can help rescue more than 5,000 children from the horrors of the sex trade in parts of Thailand, India, Cambodia and other targeted nations. Together we can reach vulnerable families and children by providing much needed food and relief. We can rescue those already ensnared by offering them a way out and we can restore their hearts, minds and bodies to enable them to enjoy life as God intended. Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their life forever. And with gifts of \$64 or \$32 we will combine your gifts with others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of this lifestyle. As our way of saying thank you, please request "The Butterfly Effect," how your life matters. The story of this book reveals how you were specially created by God to make a difference and have the power to change the world. As a special challenge, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1280 to help rescue ten children. With your gift be sure to request "Heart of the Father," our beautiful new bronze sculpture that demonstrates God's fatherly love for us as his children. Call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: When you make your gift and you ask for, "The Butterfly Effect," just understand that as surely -- scientific fact -- as a butterfly flapping its little wings can create enough movement and ultimate energy to start a hurricane, you can release

indescribable healing -- waves of healing power and the power of love. We'll be glad to send you "The Butterfly Effect" when you have that effect and help us rescue these precious lives. Thank you for doing what you can. And do encourage others to join you watching *LIFE Today*. It would be wonderful if everybody would have ears to hear what God is saying through his spirit and his word. Pass the word on, encourage others to watch.

Announcer: Tomorrow, bestselling author Eric Metaxas reveals the captivating story of a humble man of God who faced the greatest evil of the 20th century.