

Week 28

7/7/11

James: Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. We're talking about the great omission from the great commission and that's where people have mistakenly gone out and made like kind rather than Christ-like and Christ kind and really, disciples of Christ and don't go name a church disciples of Christ and think you've corrected the problem. We've already tried all the different names. You know there is nearly 300 times, in the New Testament, the word disciples of Christ, or disciples. Referenced only three times is the word Christian found in the New Testament. and it was actually something the people called them, "Christians," because they were, in fact, like Christ. It reminded them of Christ. Today we call ourselves Christians but many times we are more interested in the particular group that we're a member of or part of and we become like Catholics or like Protestants or like Pentecostals or like Baptists. You can actually go to many typical restaurants on Sunday and you can look at the different church groups. You can actually identify a lot of them when they walk in. They look like birds of the feather that flock together and they may or may not look much like Jesus when you're around them but they all kind of dress alike or look alike or their countenance is similar because they are in that group. The beauty of the family of God is you can have all of these differences and distinctives which God appreciates, not you trying to be like each other. But the fact that there are differences is pleasing to God -- very pleasing to God. He doesn't want us to all be the same so we really do need to understand that. But if Christ-likeness with all of our differences and distinctives, even theological differences, we still have heart harmony --

Betty: He doesn't want to take away the difference that he created in us, James, but he does want us to be one. If you look at families, James, we've got 19 in ours, 11 of them are grandchildren and I can look at them and get them all together and I look and see the uniqueness in which God created them. Some of them don't look -- how can they be in that family? They don't look like one another. They don't act like one another. But at the same time we're all in the same family and we can appreciate those differences if we can allow God to bring us together and make us one.

James: And that is the beauty of the distinctives but don't try to make everybody in your group look and act like you. She just described our family. They don't all look alike and act alike. They all are so different, it's what makes it beautiful. If we got them all to look and act the same that wouldn't necessarily be good at all but to be like Christ which will keep the distinctives and the differences and the uniqueness and the

diversities, it will all be there if we're like Christ. And if we're like Christ and we're his disciples, he wants to bless us. And as he blesses us he blesses others.

I've been referencing all week in the omission, the great omission from the great commission the Sermon on the Mount and the importance of understanding what Jesus is he teaching us and what Jesus is telling us. And one of the things that many people get, I believe, erroneously stumped by or stumble over, is the teaching that Jesus says blessed is the poor in spirit, in attitude, because such is the kingdom of heaven. They interpret that to mean blessed are poor people. Blessed are those in poverty. Well, that really means most of the world is really mightily blessed of God because most of the world is poor, they're in poverty. God is not speaking a blessing on poverty nor does God speak a curse on prosperity. When Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter heaven, is he saying that rich people can't go to heaven? Or is he saying that people who have riches are normally held captive by their riches and the riches that have them captive will keep them from knowing the God that will set them free. That is in fact what he is teaching. Jesus and the father God and the entire Bible, all of it, talks about being fruitful, multiplying and prospering. The word prosper is not a bad word.

By the way, some people have gone to extremes talking about western materialistic capitalism as the prosperity and blessing of God as though you could measure prosperity or blessings exclusively with a monetary or material standard. Not so! The blessings of God cannot be reduced to any mere monetary or material standard. We don't measure -- some of the most god like people I know, the most blessed people and the most prosperous people don't necessarily have money. They don't have things. They have what money can't buy.

But I know many people who have great success and have what the world would call prosperity and wealth who are not, for one moment, controlled by their wealth. They are overseers. They are stewards of everything God has entrusted to their watch care.

God is not going to make you a spiritual person by you taking a vow of poverty. Some people may want to take that. Some people -- and it is wonderful to live with a vow of poverty. Some people in monasteries do it, some people in ministries do it but remember this, those people who take that vow are still better off than the world's poor because someone is providing food for them, someone is providing shelter for them, someone is taking care of their basic needs so they can seek God all of the time. So by the true definition of poor and poverty, they're certainly not poor, they're being cared for. Let's come to understand a correct attitude toward prosperity.

By the way, I wrote a book several years ago called *True Prosperity*, not living with riches necessarily, but living richly. Not allowing your possessions to possess you but you possessing your possessions, whatever they are.

Betty, when I was speaking at our Christmas celebration this year, I looked out -- we've been blessed -- years ago, you may remember if you've listened to me over the years, I literally said to God years ago when I saw some people that had lost children in death or to disease or they had a terrible circumstance or catastrophic event and they had just lost everything and they just loved God so much. I foolishly said to God, why don't you just take everything away from me so I would love you more. And God literally spoke to my heart, I mean it was as clear as if he had a megaphone.

He said take away everything so you love me more than nothing? No! I'm going to give you everything. I'm going to bless you and see if you love me more than everything.

Betty, he has blessed us. He has blessed our family. Let me tell you something... Are you listening? I love him more than everything. At our Christmas banquet this year I said, "Many people are wondering, what if our economy collapses? What if we just lose everything?"

I don't have to live in fear of losing everything, I've already lost it. I lost it when we were teenagers when I lost my life in Christ's purpose. I don't have to fear! I don't have to fear anything that comes. Am I going to do my best to prepare to offset catastrophic consequences? I'm going to try to call the nation back into the shelter of the almighty so he will guide our steps. God is not opposed to blessing and prospering people. He wants to bless you. If you would get everything in order in your life and you put God first, really in first place, and let God give you wisdom and begin to make decisions and not to make a deal with God, say, "Okay, God. I'll start giving you some money so you'll do yada yada yada." And start telling God how he is going to start straightening everything out. You say, "God, I'm going to give you my life." As directly as you can say it, "God, I give you every part of my life. Everything that I am, I give it to you. I trust you God. Are you going to direct my steps? Beginning right now I'm going to put you first in every area of my life. I'm going to put you first in my treasure, with my money, I'm going to trust you to oversee it and give me wise oversight. I'm going to get my business in order. I'm not going to live in bondage. I'm not going to live with the foot of debt crushing me and controlling me. I am right now --" basically say what Betty and I said when we were teenagers, we lose our lives in your purpose and we find it. We want you first. Now and forever! Say it. Jesus said where your treasure is, that's where your heart is. What treasure do you have? What do you have in your

hand? What do you have? Trust it to God. Oversee it. Listen to what the Word of God says so you understand these aren't bad words. 3 John, verse two: "Beloved I pray in all respects that you may prosper and be in good health just as your soul prospers." God says I want you to prosper. I want you to prosper now! I want to bless you! Some of you are saying, there you go with the prosperity gospel. Wait a minute. I just said if you make a material measure the standard of measure you've moved away from truth. You don't have to have money to have the fullness of God but what if you had the ability to oversee vast wealth and you used it totally for the glory of God? Do the things you enjoy doing. Enjoy the things that you enjoy. Listen to what God says about how much he cares for you. Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches. You can't trust the riches of this world, they're uncertain. They can be shaken. They can be gone! They can disappear. The economy can collapse. So don't trust the uncertainty of riches, trust God. Trust God who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. What? All things! But you can't enjoy anything if God is not first. Instruct those who have wealth, who have prosperity, even monetarily. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future so that they make take hold of that which is life indeed. Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Betty, I want everything we have entrusted to God under our watch care. This is what Paul was saying to Timothy. What's been entrusted to your oversight and watch care, be a good steward, be faithful. Paul said that I know how to be without, to have need and I know how to abound. In all things I'm content. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I can have abundance and control it because I'm under the control of God doing all things through Christ. I can be in want, I can suffer need and God is my source. I trust him, he gives me peace. God is not opposed to people being blessed and we really have taken things to the extreme to the point that people don't understand how anxious God the father is to pour out good blessings upon every person listening to us. And the good blessings start with us losing our life in his kingdom purpose so that he can direct our steps, lead us in the choices that we should make. You just saw a real estate ad in a newspaper; I think one of our children sent it to us. They said, hay, the house we grew up in where we all lived, where our family lived for 30 years, where our children began to play, we went out in the middle of nowhere. They didn't even pave the streets coming back to our house until a few years ago, we're back in the middle of nowhere. You say, why did you go buy property back there? Because Betty and I were praying, God, where do you want our family to go? Where do you want us to be where our family can have some time together and have a little bit of space? And we went out kind of on the edge of nowhere, under the leadership of God. That edge of nowhere became a very valuable piece of property. That very valuable piece of property enabled you and me to do some things we never dreamed of doing to help

others and to do things that we thought you know that would be a joy and we saw that piece of property for sale seven times more than what we got that property for. For sale now. What are you telling us? I'm saying, let God direct every step in your life. Betty, I watched the blessings of God, from a father who wants to bless his children and it is as though people so often take their lives in their own hands and make a big mess out of the will of God and then others will say, well, God just wants us to be poor. He really wants people to be poor. There is absolutely no biblical truth in that attitude. He loves the poor. He wants us to love and help the poor but God is not wishing poverty on people.

Betty: No, James, God really does want to bless us spiritually and sometimes in material things but not to where we worship those things. James, he wants us to remember who the giver of those blessings are. He is the giver. I remember when our children were small and you traveled a lot and you would bring the children home -- when you came home you would bring them a gift or something. As they got a little bit older, I remember a time whenever you came home, you'd been gone quite a while and you came in and the first thing they said is, "Daddy, what did you thing me? What did you bring me?" We looked at one another and said, "Whoa! Whoa!" Our kids were more excited about what they thought they were going to get, a toy or whatever, than to see their father, to see their daddy. We had to draw back and say, wait a minute, we do not ever want to say God, bless us and then worship those blessings. We want to worship God who gives those blessings.

James: That was a great experience for our children. I'm watching many Christians who just go to God to get. God wants to bless. All you do is yield and get in the presence of the father and he sets a table before you in the presence of your enemies. He will anoint your head with oil. He is going to literally calm the troubled waters. He will give you peace in the valley, even in the shadow of death. God's presence is what literally gives us what? -- The prosperity of a life that overflows with the grace, glory, and goodness of God. That is the real way in which God prospers our soul! But he also says he wants to prosper us in health and he wants to prosper us in the things we do in life. So God really wants to bless. Listen to what Paul said when he was talking about the Philippian Christians because if I could get this through to you, if you would understand that becoming a disciple of Christ and becoming someone totally submitted to his will so that you would live in such a way that you could be trusted with the riches of this world and the things of this world would grow dim in the light of his glory and grace, no matter how much you have oversight of or control of in every way you would be giving God glory for it. Well, this is what Betty and I pray for and want for you! If it is what we want, imagine how much more God the father wants it for you. Listen to what Paul is saying when he was talking to particular Christians. It

would almost be as though and some of you have been so faithful whenever we say, let's drill a water well. Would you help feed those children? Would you help us rescue some children from the sex traffic and the sex trade and you say, "Yes, I will!" Listen; many of you come and watch *LIFE Today* every day to try to see another way or some way you could meet a need in someone's life. That is the heart of the father. But please don't miss this: God wants to bless you. He wants to rearrange the affairs of your life. He is not interested for one moment in keeping you downtrodden, under the weight or load of anything that limits your ability to simply do the will of the father. I want you to listen very specifically to what Paul said to some people that I believe are just like you. Many of you have said, James, we want to help. You are the greatest blessing -- like missionary said, you're the greatest Christians on earth. You keep the people in place doing the will of God. You keep this program on the air. You keep us reaching out to build harmony among the family of God among leadership. You make what God has called us to do possible. Listen to who Paul said to someone like you. Take this as though God is speaking to you through the Apostle Paul because this is the Word of God directly to us. This is the letter that God has written to you very directly. Listen to what he is saying. Philippians, chapter four, beginning at verse 15: You yourself know, Philippians, you viewers of *LIFE Today*, every one of you who help the outreaches of *LIFE*, you Philippians know that at the first preaching of the gospel when have I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving. You're the only church, you're the only family of believers in your community, you're the ones that made it possible. You're the ones that did it. I want to say to you, you're the ones that made possible every outreach of life. Betty and I have a part in it. We plan our lives in those outreaches. We participate in supporting. But you make it possible. Now listen to what he said. "For even in Thessalonica, you sent a gift more than once for my needs, not that I seek the gift itself but I seek for the profit which increases to your account." Paul says as important as this gift is and you're the only ones that were doing it, as important, as necessary as it is, I don't want the gift just to have the gift and receive it, even though I need it, I can't do what I'm called to do unless I have it and you're meeting the need but that's not the reason I'm even talking about it. I want you to give it and I thank you for giving it because I want it to increase to your account, I want it for your benefit because it blesses you when you help bless others. Not that I seek the gift itself but I seek to profit that increases your account. I have received everything in full and I have abundance. I'm amply supplied having received from Epaphroditus what has been sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice well pleasing to God and my God will supply all -- all -- all of your needs." Not necessarily all of your desires. Bonhoeffer said one of the greatest things that could happen, the prisoner during the German holocaust, he said when you're free of desire, when your desires do not control, that is reaching a high place in the Kingdom of God. My God will supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory

by Christ Jesus. Doesn't mean it is wrong to have a desire, to have a legitimate desire, need, totally right. But to be freed from being controlled by anything but the will of God and God wants to bless us. He said consider the birds in the Sermon on the Mount. Betty, look at them. Look at them. God takes care of them. They don't worry but they do work. They get up early and they seek the provision and watch care of God. Consider the lilies. Betty, we've been talking about those roses. We peek out back every day. We look at those little roses and you know something? They're just yielded to God and they're bearing fruit. Even Solomon was not adorned more beautifully than the lilies of the field. God wants to bless and take care of you. Please get this deep down in your heart. If you live to be a disciple of Jesus, not just a church member, as important as that church family and fellowship is, let's not just go to church, let's be the church. Let's not just have a membership but let's have a relationship with God, a fellowship with one another in the family and let's reveal Jesus as he is living in us. He wants to bless you. He wants to bless through you. Father, my prayer for every viewer and every listener is that they would be yielded clay, that they would become a plant rooted and grounded in love and that they will bring forth fruit 100 fold that looks like you, truly your follower, your disciple. In Jesus' name.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: We're called -- we, all of us, you included -- to make disciples of the nation -- of the nations -- of every nation. We are to impact every area of life. That's God's call for us. From the bottom of my heart I thank you for helping us. What I've shared this week, I call The Great Omission from the Great Commission. We've made like kind not Christ-like. We've made members of churches, rather than members of the family, connected members of the body of Christ revealing him in his glory. We want to do everything we can to help you grow and we're going to be here every day to do that. Right now we have an opportunity to literally express our gratitude for God's blessing by blessing someone else in an indescribable fashion. Now listen, if you want your prayers answered, you be an answer to someone else's prayer. You be an answer to Jesus' prayer by oneness with the father, unity with one another but doing the will of the father when it comes to meeting needs. Here is a need you don't just have to hope it is met, God will meet it through you.

James: I don't want any more to die that we can help. I know there may be some we can't get to but would you help us give fresh water to 10 precious children and their families... to 20 or 30? Would you help us drill a fresh water well? We're committed with your help to drill 415 in 15 nations. Betty, we've been spending more time

teaching and sharing just like today and sometimes I think well, we're trying to pour the life and love of God into our viewers have we taken from the time necessary to explain how critically important that water is? Dear God, I hope not! I pray you'll get up right now and go and get your bankcard or get your checkbook or go online LifeToday.org, take your bankcard and just say, "I want to help you drill a well." \$48 we can give 10 people water for the rest of their life. Could you make that gift? Or write a check and put it in the mail? \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life. Betty, we've found great joy in giving a water well. Many of our viewers say it is the highlight of their year. \$4800 will give a well. \$1200, three people join you; pray those three people will join you. If you give \$1200 or \$2400 and pray somebody will join you but if you can give a well, do it. Betty, it is a tremendous joy.

Betty: It really is, James. You and I will do it again because we know how important it is for life for these children. They're going to get the water wherever they find it. Let's give them a choice. Let's do the water wells so they'll have a choice to go to safe water. Let's give these mothers a choice to offer their babies that they love so very, very much. You say, "How could they give them that water?" That's all they have. They have to have the water. So let's give them the water well so that those mothers can give their babies the nourishment that they need to survive!

James: If you'll simply dial the number you can be an answer to the prayers and heart cry of those precious people, and what Betty said -- please! We want to send you some wonderful gifts to bless you. We'll gladly send you the teaching this week on The Great Omission from the Great Commission, really living in kingdom presence now and understanding it; CD or DVD, just ask for it. But we have other gifts to just bless you as you give the great gift of life. Please dial that number. Make the best gift you can. Put it on your bankcard or you can go online LifeToday.org. Thank you so much for not turning away, for reaching out and helping us share life.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice, drink filthy, polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision. The good news is that there is a solution -- Mission: Water For Life is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. The suffering can end because clean water changes everything in life. With your support we will drill 415 new water wells in remote villages in 15 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people! A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10 people! \$72 will reach 15 people. And \$144 will help

provide fresh clean disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime! In appreciation for your gift to help drill these new wells be sure to request the Kingdom Life Journal. This beautiful leather bound prayer devotional includes both Psalms and Proverbs, as well as a place to write your own reflections as God speaks to you through his word. Also please prayerfully 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 the journal as well as our beautiful commemorative bronze sculpture, "Heart of the Father." Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Betty and I, from the depth of our heart, we just say thank you so much for your help. Thank you for your friendship. I really encourage you, stand with us in prayer. God has really put it on my heart to call the family together in a holy unity that is indescribable and supernatural, and we need your support and prayers to be able to do it. If you'd like to have the teaching that we've been sharing on The Great Omission, feel free to ask for it. Thank you for helping us share water. Thank you for helping us give life!

>> We've got to speak the truth and we've got to speak it in season or out of season, whether it is popular or whether it is not popular.

Announcer: Next week, Lisa Bevere empowers women to become The Lioness Arising.