

Week 31

7/25/11

James: We appreciate the opportunity of sharing with you. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. It is not too often, I've caught you checking it out every now and then, *The View*.

Betty: Not very often, do I?

James: It stretches us a little bit. You ladies, I don't know if you ever want to watch us because you may not care about our view, but the thing is that I really appreciated what I saw when I saw a brother and a sister on when they were talking about an experience that happened where two horrible drug-crazed driven young men came in and took their family captive and shot all of them -- a brother, a sister, a mom and a dad, and killed mother and dad.

The son and daughter lived miraculously and the son, Brooks made a movie of the story. It is called *Heaven's Rain*. I want to tell you how you can get it. It would be awesome for you to have it; share the message of it in the church. But Betty, as we listened to them, I told you when we heard them talking about what had happened and the capacity to reach a point where you could forgive the unforgivable; I was moved by the presence of almighty God. And I said, "I would really like to communicate with Brooks, with Leslie; she is teaching, she is very active. She had quite a battle because she was raped and shot. It's been a tough grind -- but Brooks actually went to the shooter, while he was in prison. It is quite a story.

I want you to welcome Brooks Douglass, I think a very courageous man. Would you welcome him to *Life Today*? I want you to know I was really moved. I feel like the ladies there on *The View* treated you with a tremendous amount of respect for which I really appreciate. But I was moved by what happened. I want you to just recap just briefly what you share in the story in *Heaven's Rain*.

And we're going to tell everybody how they can get it; I would like them to get it. But what led up to then you going to what we're actually going to see because you played in the movie that you did as your dad, he was killed. You actually reached a point where you went to the killer. Just set this up, truly about what you want us to know, capsule the story and what led you to the prison.

Brooks: Thank you for noticing and thank you for having me on the show and giving me the chance to talk about the subject of forgiveness, which I know is so important to you and your ministry. In 1979 I was 16 years old. My parents and our family prior to that had served as missionaries to Brazil, and father was a pastor of a Baptist church, Putnam City Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. In 1979, two guys by the name of Glenn Ake and Steve Hatch came to our home which was just outside --, a little farmhouse just outside of Oklahoma City.

They came to the door, said they needed help. Wanted to use the phone. I let them in to do that, which is what we had been taught to help people in need. They pulled guns on us and hog tied us all, hands and feet behind our back on our living room floor. They spent the next couple of hours robbing us, and as you mentioned took turns raping my then 12-year-old sister, Leslie. They then sat down and ate the dinner that my mother had been fixing and then shot us all in the back and left us for dead. My parents died there in front of me.

My sister and I managed -- she got herself untied, came and cut me loose and I was able to drive us to a doctor's home who lived in a nearby town. They took us to a hospital and they began to start the recovery, at least the physical recovery process. I went on from there.

They caught the two guys, Ake and Hatch, they caught them about six weeks later. They had killed two other people in Texas in the meantime. And then from there went to college, went to law school, got elected to the state senate and really got myself -- I shouldn't say got myself -- the Lord brought me to a place where I was able to meet with one of the guys that shot us.

James: You went on with what appeared to be a successful life and yet you indicate that there was still an emptiness inside even though you had what everybody would call success. You had visibility that somehow even giving you a place of recognition, prominence and service. You were elected the youngest senator ever in Oklahoma. In this very successful role there was still something wrong inside. Right? What did it feel like? What was going on?

Brooks: Well, I am on the, as you've mentioned, the outside appearances all look great but on the inside and behind that my life was completely disintegrating. I had a marriage that was falling apart and ultimately did completely fall apart. I was broke. Electric bill, water bill -- you can see the contrast in the movie. I would walk in the capitol and everybody is addressing me as "Senator, please do this" or "Do that, senator." And then at night I was sleeping on a mattress in the middle of a dining

room floor with no water, running water, no electricity. Things were not matching up.

James: Something was terribly out of place.

Brooks: Most everything was out of place.

James: Why did you end up going to the prison because we're actually going to see from the movie the portrayal of when he went and met with the killer -- the actual shooter. What led up to that?

Brooks: I had authored a lot of victim's rights legislation and then I was part of a leadership group from the legislature that had gone to the prison to tour it and did not plan on, when I went, on meeting any of them. But it was really as much out of fear as anything because one of them had had his death sentence overturned, it was Glenn Ake, the guy who actually pulled the trigger had his death sentence overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court and now he had life sentences. Now I was afraid I might run into him. So I asked where he was. That led to my saying, "I want to meet with him."

Initially I was told "no" and had I not been a state senator, it never would have happened. But I asked to see him and I can remember at that point my life was so falling apart behind the scenes. It kind of felt like I had nothing to lose in a way. Secondly, I got to looking back, I remember as I was going to that meeting, thinking about maybe this is my destiny, maybe this is what the Lord has planned by one, I'd been in the military, the special forces and then come out and went to law school, was a member of the senate and all these things seemed to line up for me to be able to create this meeting.

James: And you really didn't even know the outcome?

Brooks: Of all the possible outcomes that I could think of, not really any of them were good. But I knew it was something I needed to do. My father -- my parents had set an example for me of forgiveness and of course, our faith teaches us we are required to forgive.

James: But that wasn't like a premeditated thing going on in your mind when you went to see him?

Brooks: I wouldn't say it was absolutely premeditated.

James: But it was a consideration.

Brooks: Oh, absolutely.

James: Let's visit that scene. Let's watch that.

Glen: I was hoping for this.

Brooks: I don't even know what to say to you. All these years I wanted nothing more than to see dead.

Glen: They told me you wanted to talk to me. And I wanted to see you. I just want to give you the chance to say whatever it is you want to say to me.

Brooks: I didn't come here to explain myself.

Glen: Do what you got to do because you're in the right and I'm in the wrong. I want you to know I am so so sorry for what I did to you and your family.

Brooks: My father always taught me I should always forgive. But it just isn't in me to do that.

Glen: I understand.

Brooks: All this because of what you and Hatch did. It was a decision that you made. You didn't even know us!

Glen: If there was anything I could do to bring your parents back so they were still alive, I would do it.

Brooks: Do you wish you were dead?

Glen: Sometimes I do. Yep!

Brooks: We thought you needed help. Our door was always open to anyone. I want you to tell me why? Why?

Glen: You want the truth?

Brooks: Yeah.

Glen: Well, the truth is there was no reason. Me and Hatch, we were on speed and drinking but that wasn't the reason. It was just -- it was just senseless.

Brooks: Senseless!

James: What happened?

Brooks: Well, I kept him there for about an hour and a half and we had a very frank conversation. I turned to walk out of the meeting with nothing -- none of the things I thought would happen happening. I put my hand on the door and when I did I felt like the Lord said, "This isn't finished. This isn't done."

I looked back at him and I walked back over. And I said, "My father -- Again, my father always taught me that I should forgive." Then I remember looking at him and I said, "I forgive you." Not at all what I would have believed would happen but obviously the hand of God was on us -- on me at that moment.

Betty: What was going on inside of you when that moment came, after you said those words?

Brooks: Well, to tell you exactly what I felt, I remember -- I don't think I understood the amount of anger and rage that I felt in me until I was on my way into the room to meet with him. That's when all the other possibilities started to come to mind. And then when I told him I forgave him it was like my body and my head being full of water and it was just a poison. I could almost physically see the bottoms of my feet open up and the water running out all over the floor. I remember almost hyperventilating, and I felt like I could breathe, like somebody took a clamp off of my chest and I can breathe for the first time in 15 years. It was such an amazing, incredible physical experience. All of my senses were heightened.

I remember when I walked outside after that the sky was bluer, the trees were greener, everything was much more vibrant. It changed me. It changed the way I looked at the world. I was a Christian, I was saved but there was that rage that I -- it was so big I couldn't even see it, is the only way I can describe it. It was such a part of me. And it led me -- even when I went back to the capitol, I was in the state senate then and I walked in and we had a date for filing bills and there was a stack of bills on my desk. I remember thinking, I need to go through every one of these and I need to read them and make sure that the reason I'm doing these are not out of some sense of rage or revenge or anger but because it is the right thing to do.

Happily, when I read through them, I was comfortable with what I was doing but it led me to rethink all of these things and to make sure that I was on the right track and the things that I had been doing were right.

James: You began to find the fullness of the freedom that is in forgiveness, not only being forgiven but forgiving. That's what I can see in your countenance, what I can see now. Your whole life basically changed. He tried to kill you. He killed your parents. He tried to kill your sister. The rage and hurt, very legitimate hurt, anger is very natural, it is a very natural expression. But when it settles in it becomes a poison to your whole system. And you were in fact dying while you were walking; you were a dead man walking even though you were in high places.

When you forgave something happened; right? That's the reason for your movie; that's the reason for Heaven's Rain because that is not only the rain of God's forgiveness on us but his divine enabling us to forgive because you have got to agree, the only way you could ever possibly forgive, every viewer knows, and a lot of them are saying, "I couldn't do that!" I couldn't either without the grace of God, no one could! You couldn't! But when you receive that divine ability that's when really life began anew for you, even though you were a Christian.

Let me just say to our viewers. There is the web site where you can get Heaven's Rain. They can show it in their churches, they can bring churches together and have a city outreach and put it in a civic center. There are many ways they can use it but you'll tell them if they go to the web site there on the screen, how they can get the film, how they can utilize it or how they can watch it with their family and see the lesson of forgiveness. Am I right about that?

Let me just say this to you because I don't want you to miss this. See my mother was raped at 40; never had a child, conceived a child, tried to have the child aborted. I was born; I was that child. The alcoholic who raped her came back into our life, literally when I was a teenager, tried to kill her, said he was going to kill me. In self defense I nearly killed him. Years later, I found him lying in the street drunk. I didn't know who it was, I just saw a man. I got out to help him; it was my dad. I took him and put him in a place to take care of him. Went back the day later, I had people looking after him. He had thrown up all over himself. I picked him up, a man I didn't know. I said, "I don't know you." It was my own dad. "I don't know you. I don't know you, but I love you." -- Filthy father that I had never known.

I'm telling you, Brooks, I was just a young man then. What happened in that moment of forgiveness, the effects of that and the capacity to forgive is a supernatural thing. I want to tell you this -- listen to me -- not only does God forgive us but he will give you the grace to forgive others. It is critically important. Father, not only forgive us, forgive us as we forgive others. God, help people to understand. And Lord, give people the grace to forgive. This is a miracle! -- But free people with this capacity. In Jesus' name.

Jesus said don't even come to worship, to the altar and remember, if someone has aught against you, not just you ought against them but go and try to make it right. It is so important that we live with a river of forgiveness flowing freely. Do you appreciate Brooks being willing to share this story and this testimony? Because it is only the grace of God enabling him to do it, but that same grace is available to all who will receive it, and that's my prayer for every one of you. I want to show you something that is every bit as real as the pain of any hurt that could come. And this lack, this problem cost lives and really the answer is from God, for God is love and it is through love. I want you to listen to a wife and a mother, I want you to listen to this -- this is incredible. In this particular situation, in so many ways, you're the answer and I think you're going to be glad to be. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: This is Alotswa, she comes here every day with her children to collect water. Alotswa is in mourning. Her husband died two and a half months ago. She was told that he had amoebas that came from the water he drank.

Alotswa: I worry because my children have stomach problems from drinking this water. We are very poor and I have no other place to go and get water for us.

Announcer: One year ago she also lost her oldest daughter to the same illness.

James: Mom, what goes on when you look at a situation like that? I want to know what you are thinking.

Betty: Well, first of all, her first tragedy she lost her daughter, and then lost her husband who I'm sure she and the children depended on greatly in love. She has to be asking who is next? And wanting so much to give her children the pure water they need, James but you have to have water. They have to have water. So they have no choice. That's what breaks my heart is they don't have a choice to drink the clean water but we can make that difference.

James: You see Betty, because of the missionary literally taking us to that particular setting, we told them that we would drill them a well. And we told them that with confidence not only in God but a confidence in the viewers of *LIFE Today* that you would enable us to do it. As a matter of fact, we have told the people in over 400 areas where missionaries have pointed us to a need that can realistically and effectively be met. So we told them we were going to do that so you can imagine that hope springs up.

But the only way we can fulfill our desire is for you to enable us to help the missionaries and the services and the groups that we have either hired or we have bought the rigs and put them in place, which you paid for over the years, we drill the well, and it takes \$4800. I have an idea that's going to increase with the ever-increasing cost of fuel, both diesel and gasoline. It is just going out of sight. But we're believing God will touch hearts of people like you who will say, "You know what? I can help."

Let me give you an example. If you couldn't afford to drill a well and we've got people who tell us there is no greater joy. Betty and I love to do this. We ask God to enable us to do it. We believe God answered our prayer. We've been able to do it.

Every time the missionaries say, "Okay, here is an opportunity." We say, "Okay, we're in." Well, you do it if you can drill a well. Maybe could say, "I can't do that but I can give \$2400 and pray somebody matches and steps up beside me." Or \$1200 and pray three others do. Please do that if you can. I'm asking you to.

Just take your bankcard, go to the phone, use it like a check or write a check, make it to *LIFE*. Call us and tell us you're mailing it or go online, LifeToday.org and say, "I want to make my gift today."

But keep this in mind, this is so important! The majority of the support comes from people who say, "You know what? I can't do that but I can help." As an example, \$48, 10 people water the rest of their life. You'll be contributing toward the well. \$144 gift: 30 people water the rest of their life. Could you help 10? Could you help 30? -- Whatever you can do. Would you just dial that number? Please don't turn away. Think about that mother. Think about the missionaries. Think about the people. We've given them hope; now let's give them the help that makes hope a reality.

Please make that call. We've got some very special gifts for you to bless you and you are giving the gift of life. Thank you for doing it. Thank you for making the call.

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: We're looking forward to sending you the Kingdom Life Journal. It is going to be a tremendous blessing to you. Betty and I have been so blessed writing the things God puts on our heart as we go through the scriptures.

I do hope you'll get the "Heart of the Father" bronze. Help us drill those wells. I want to remind you of Heaven's Rain. There again you can go on LifeToday.org and get total information about it. But there again is the web site.

Betty and I want to say along with all of you in the audience, thanks again to Brooks Douglass for sharing the story of the greatness of God enabling him to forgive the impossible! God bless you.

Brooks: God bless you!

James: You tell your sister we're praying for her all of the time.

Brooks: I'll let her know. Thank you!

James: Thank you so much. You're wonderful friends! God bless you.

>> These are not questions that I'm the only one asking. They're questions really that confront every woman.

Announcer: Recapturing God's global vision for women -- tomorrow!