

Week 36

9/6/11

James: A lot of enthusiasm here. I see a lot of Jerseys from Faith Christian; that's in Grapevine. Grapevine is basically where the DFW Airport is, if you want to know the truth. It is in the mid cities areas between Dallas and Fort Worth. Grapevine is a neighboring community to the east of where Betty and I live in mid cities of the D.F.W. metroplex. And Grapevine Faith is a great Christian school; they teach the right things.

I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

You're going to see one of the greatest expressions of love you're ever going to witness, and the end result of that love will be felt throughout eternity. You're going to actually look in on a football game where a Christian school, because of the love of God, playing against the Gainesville incarceration unit for teenagers, for juveniles -- it is a prison -- played these young men who are given a chance, if they kept the rules, to play football. They didn't see a whole lot of love except from their coaches until they went to play Faith Christian. Watch.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: At the Gainesville State School things are not quite like they are at any other high school campus. Here the students, ages 13 to 19, are all convicted criminals. A life at this maximum security facility is anything but normal.

Yet if these kids achieve in the classroom and meet the school's strict behavior standards they can play football; the one thing that provides a brief brush with freedom. Yet for the Gainesville boys every game is an away game, every crowd an away crowd, most with little understanding or compassion. Each experience holds a constant reminder of who they are and what they've done.

After suffering through a 2008 season that saw eight consecutive losses, and after scoring just 14 points all season long while giving up over 300, the Tornados traveled to Grapevine to finish their season against private school power house Faith Christian.

>> As soon as I knew Gainesville was in our district, I wonder what that's going to be like? I bet there is a way to impact them. The outgrowth of that was what would give

them the most hope? And so then we had the idea.

Announcer: Hogan sent an e-mail to the entire faith community asking fans, students, and parents to do something out of the ordinary. Cheer for Gainesville and make these boys feel like they were their own.

>> I was just seeing all the people right there and I was just shocked, surprised. Then when I found out it was a spirit line and they wanted us to run through it, I mean -- it just -- it was just a good feeling to have.

>> Run through that line, crash through that banner and have fun all night long; that's what it is all about.

[Cheering].

>> When we came running to the other side it was like we didn't want to stop. It was like a rush; like you couldn't stop.

>> After they made the spirit line they came and sat on our side. I was thinking, what are these people doing?

>> You saw hope in their eyes when they came out and saw that spirit line, and then confidence every time the fans cheered for them.

>> It seriously looked like they just won the Super Bowl. They were so happy.

>> It was almost like they didn't have to prove anything. There was such a celebration of them they began to think, yeah, we are a team like everybody else.

[Whistle blowing]

Announcer: While the scoreboard showed Gainesville coming up short that night, losing by a score of 33 to 14, it hardly mattered.

>> Amen!

>> Amen!

>> You could show us the scoreboard a million times and you still can't convince us that we lost. I felt like God was just touching upon all of us and letting us know that there is people out there that care about you.

>> It felt good knowing that the people out there today, even the ones that don't even know you, they're going to care about you.

>> Their emotional maturity went up several years that night when they saw that there were more people out there that were giving of their heart, these are the things that make them feel that they're just as important as any other kid on the face of this earth.

>> It motivated me and gave me a lot of hope.

>> They're willing to help us as long as we're willing to help ourselves. They're willing to give us a second chance as long as we're willing to take a second chance.

>> We could be affirmed in the fact that we really made a difference that night and I think, you can see it is down the road, we made a difference.

>> Had we done this before, made 10, 12, 15 years ago, had we done things like this, there is a good possibility that this place might not even exist.

[Cheering]

James: Isn't that great!

[Applause]

Hoo! I don't know what you felt but I sure felt a lot of love.

I want to introduce you to the gentlemen that we have here. You saw each one of them briefly in the film. Here nearest me is the coach at Gainesville that is now coaching at Grapevine, actually, but Mark Williams is here. Welcome Mark. Would you just say, we're glad to have you?

On the other end of row, I want to introduce the coach that is at Faith Christian and that is Kris Hogan.

Kris, God put this on your heart.

Just say a big welcome to Kris.

And then in the center you see Mack White.

Mack, I appreciated hearing your heart there just briefly.

Say welcome to Mack.

Let me just ask you, Mack. You're kind of sitting here in the center of this group that I think is absolutely a beautiful picture of what love can do. What did that night with those fans cheering for you and the surprise and running through the spirit line, running through the banner and all that, what did it do to the whole team as a whole when you felt that impact of the expressions of love?

Mack: Well, first it matured us as far as give us hope, and to have some kind of reason to feel like we had a purpose on this earth.

Just growing up not having that solid foundation of parents to believe in you and give you hope, it kind of destroys who you really are and it destroys the motivation and the hope to want to be something.

So you're like in the worst point of your life when you are incarcerated, you're taken from everything. That's the point right there.

And I was getting released during the next year, but like the next year because that was like at the end of year, and I was getting released soon so that kind of motivated me to want to do something with my life. And it helped me to believe -- it helped me to have hope and to say there is somebody out there that cares about me and I have something to prove in this world because those people motivated us. I feel like they paved the way for us in order to want to be someone when we get out and to connect with those same people.

James: That made a lifetime impact on him and because of the love of God, they actually made an eternal impact; didn't they?

Kris, you've got this on your heart. Tell me about it because I know you've been going to prison. You've got a winning football team out at Faith Christian; you've got a great legacy of victories and championships. What in the world inspired you to do what you guys did as Faith Christian and all those wonderful people?

Kris: Well, I'd like to say it's a biblical worldview. This seems like a no-brainer when you've got 16 and 17 year olds coming to you without the proper support, without the parental structure, and they're coming to your campus. It seems like a no-brainer to show them what -- how great they can be and that the imprint of Christ is on them.

So the idea was to -- exactly what Mack expressed -- it was to give hope because when you're incarcerated, the thing you lack the most is hope. So the faith family did a great job expressing to these kids how valuable they are.

Betty: Was there anything special that you said to your team before you began the game as far as their --

Kris: Yeah, we have pregame instruction every single game. This one was unique, obviously, and that is to play hard but project Christ the best way you can every play, whatever that looks like. Then we talked about those strategies all week.

James: You talked about worldview, Kris and I think really -- and then you referenced hope. I think when you have a twisted worldview or a worldview that is not based on absolute rock-solid principles and truth, I think you have a sense of hopelessness because you can't see the standard clearly; you don't really know what the target is. It would be like playing football and your team not knowing where the goal is. Just kind of take off in whatever direction, whatever whim you've got and not play as a family.

Our nation needs to begin to behave as a family; that's the worldview you're talking about. The church needs to behave as a family.

I want you to know that I believe you illustrated what the family of God looks like and what the world should see in the family of God. There is nobody watching us on television anywhere in the world that couldn't see the love that was literally demonstrated and expressed toward your team.

Do you agree you felt love? You said a moment ago, Mack, "We felt like we had hope." Was it the hope that love offered when you saw people cared, that meant that there was possibilities for the future? That's what you saw?

Mack: Yes.

James: Did it impact all the team? Could you see a definite impression that was made?

Mack: It impacted all of us. You saw -- when you are in jail it's kind of like you want to put on this hard ego. People don't want to be themselves because they're scared to be judged. So a lot of time you're just fighting egos and pride in jail.

So that time, being incarcerated, they basically, that love told us, you can put those egos aside, we love you. Accept this love. So at that time you saw who -- what those people really were. You saw a lot of our peer -- I saw a lot of my peers' true emotions come out, true hope come out and start to tend to care about things more than I saw before that game started.

James: That's great! Well, Mark, you were coaching these guys, now you're coaching at Grapevine. But you were trying to help these boys. What did you see? What was going on because I know you had to have an interest in the boys. You were doing your best to help them.

Mark: Well, we used that as a reward and football -- to get out on Friday night and to play other teams, to be able to get out and breathe fresh air. It was very inspiring to watch the kids as they left campus, and the other kids sit in the dorm, they would be looking out the windows at us, as we're leaving, making fun of us, saying, "You're going to get slaughtered! You're going to get slaughtered!"

These kids didn't care. They wanted to go out and smell fresh air. To see them do that, it was really amazing.

James: Well, you saw the affect. Now I know you've got -- you encouraged Mack, he got out. You gave him some direction and some help. What did you tell him to do?

Mark: Well, before that he was a pretty tough cookie. When I first met him he was -- oh, I had to work with him.

James: I like that smile!

[Laughter]

Mark: He knows. As a matter of fact I --

James: Yeah, you lost your toughness.

[Laughter]

I'll tell you what, what you gained was a courageous image -- rock solid -- that's what you gained. Go ahead, what were you going to --.

Mark: When he first got there, he was... like I said he was a hard kid. He was going to do it his way. He was going to do it his way.

I kept coaching him. I said, "Mack, if you'll do this, if you'll do this, I'll let you play football. I'll let you play basketball. We'll do this -- we'll do this together."

"I'm the best there is! I'm the best there is!"

"Okay! Okay! Let's do this."

So when that happened that night, I saw a total 180 degree change in this kid right here. He was already doing great but he did greater. And today he's carrying it on and he is showing other people how.

James: What's he doing now? Kris, tell us about it. We're going to put a web site up. But I want you to tell what you're doing and what you're hoping to inspire all over the country.

Kris: It is a major motion picture. You can look at the web site as OneHeart.com. It tells about all the action items associated with the film and it is to help incarcerated youth. There is a redirection program for the kids as they come out. There is a rehabilitation program associated with it as well. A lot of programs -- it is really a large, large project. And going to web site you can really see all the ways you can get involved.

James: Can you show communities all over the country and even all over the world ways that they can impact the overlooked because I know in talking to you, you've got a great love in your heart for the kids that have been troubled. Did you have a troubled past yourself that caused you to have this? Where did you get this courage?

Kris: No, I just knew a lot of people like Mack.

[Laughter]

I'm kidding! I'm kidding! No, it is the same thing as everyone who has become a believer. When Christ gets a hold of your heart, he changes the way you view people. And that's the bottom line to it.

James: So can you give, on your web site, can you give some insight and some help to people how they can make a difference in their community because this is what we want. We want to help inspire the church community, the community that should be full of compassion and releasing the effect of that compassion on those around them. We want to be a source not only of inspiration but setting an example. You can help do that.

Kris: It's so simple. What we did. We're surprised, a little bit that the media covered it and it was such a big explosion. Shouldn't it be normal what we did? I'll tell you this, a lot of times, I'm on the TV show talking about what happened but I'm telling you, there is way too much credit given to me. The credit is the people who received the e-mail and took action.

See, in this country and all over the world everyone's knowledge level supersedes their obedience level. And you have to be a doer of the word, James 1:22. There wouldn't have been a night because of just the idea. Somebody had to follow through and the credit belongs to the faith families who showed up and made it happen.

Betty: What did this do for some of your team because they were demonstrating, they were playing hard, I'm sure, but they were demonstrating the love that you had spoken to them about.

Kris: I'll tell you exactly what it did for them. I don't think they recognized the need for salt and light. When the media looked at it, blew it up, major motion picture, I'm going to the Super Bowl, I'm on TV shows like today, they're looking around and seeing, they live kind of in a bubble, a Christian home, they're in a private school -- with an intentional bubble, which I think is smart.

But they don't understand the great need of salt and light until they recognize you look out and see how people respond, they're thinking, this is normal from our viewpoint, and the problem is it is not normal across the country. It used to be -- and so it demonstrated a great need for our kids.

James: We've heard the gospel without seeing a clear demonstration of the power, the transforming power of the gospel into people professing it to reveal that it has changed their lives. You don't have to stay where you were.

You and I both had troubled families, we didn't have a stable situation; you indicated your dad was even around more than your mother. You've had to deal with

forgiveness. You would not -- I don't think -- have had the ability to forgive if you hadn't experienced some forgiveness yourself. Am I right about that?

Mack: You're right.

James: Now you understand the importance of forgiving as well as being forgiven. Am I right about that?

Mack: Yes.

James: You sense that in your heart?

Mack: Yes.

James: And did this fan that fire of what you knew needed to happen?

Mack: I think from the game and from because where I grew up at, a lot of us are ignorant to a lot of things. And the things that we do know, if you'll just listen -- if you are incarcerated and you listen to the way they talk to you and know what they're learning at home, you'll know that they weren't raised by a solid mom or a solid dad. You'll hear gang stuff come out of their mouth or stuff that a pimp would say or somebody who was misled.

When you hear that, that teaches you what is being taught in that environment. So when you're taught something else and it is like you're believing in something that is really not true. And then once the exposure happens and you're finally -- you finally see that what you believed in was wrong because it was demonstrated to you, then you tend to have an open mind about a different life, a new life.

And that's what I was taught. Because it is demonstration of love, it is hard to show love if you were never taught or it was never demonstrated to you. So because it was taught to me and then I learned about forgiveness, and I learned that as I've been staying here, when I make mistakes people are still here to support me and help me out, that helps me to do that with somebody else. It helps me to be more patient with somebody else when I feel like they're messing up and trying to help them. But the old me wouldn't have tolerated that because it wasn't tolerated with me.

James: Take my hand. I never had a father, didn't have a home, let me tell you something, I was a kid that wasn't even picked, I was still standing there. God said, "I

choose you, and use you." I've been able to touch the lives of millions of people who didn't have a good home.

Let me tell you something, Mack, you're going to be very special. What you just said, you just delivered a great message.

Aren't you proud of him? Mark, Kris, aren't you proud of him? Don't you want to just say thanks be to God? Especially young men.

God is really going to use you. You just said a mouthful.

You just heard profound truth from a former prisoner set free by the love of God.

Father, I pray you not only set prisoners free but God, I pray you free Christians and professing Christians to be a light, to be salt and light and pierce the darkness and go love somebody right in their own community, in Jesus' name.

We can do that! We can do that together.

I just thank you so much.

Again, thanks to these coaches and thank God for One Heart. There is the web site there on the screen. You can go there.

Let me ask you to do something. I want to ask you to go to the phone in a moment. Some may be calling and say, "I want to give my life to God. I want to trust Christ. I want to get active." Would you dial the number too and say, "I want to give some smiles and some shoes to some children this coming Christmas." We've got to do it now in order to get these to the ends of the earth, to put shoes on 200,000 children's feet.

Watch and listen but reach out. This is your opportunity to make a huge difference in someone's life. Watch closely.

Begin video clip:

>> I was hungry and you gave me food to fill my empty stomach.

>> When I was thirsty, you handed me a cup of clean water to drink.

>> I needed shelter, you gave me a home.

>> When I needed help, you gave me hope!

>> This Christmas, would you consider giving 200,000 needy children something they have never had before?

End of clip

James: You know what? I love those little children and I'm not just saying that. I not only love them, we get to show them love.

Betty, we get to show them love because people out here are willing to share the love, not just talk about it, not just sing about it in church, but we're able to put shoes on those little feet like they said, the little children talking, give water and give food, whatever the need. Those shoes that we give them, that's a very special surprise, they never even dreamed they'd have shoes.

Betty: James, it's so much more than just giving them something that they don't have, it is putting protection on their precious feet.

Jesus does love every little child in the world and he cares about them from head to toe. He cares about them being safe. He cares about them being thirsty. He cares about them being hungry and I believe he cares about their feet because more than just the shoes, the feet can help keep them from getting disease, James, because they get cuts, they get sores, and they get all kinds of disease that come because of those injuries on their feet. I think it is a great opportunity to say, "Hey, we care about you!"

Won't you join with us?

James: Well, several years ago the missionaries made us aware that there is a hookworm that often gets into their body through some kind of a cut in their foot or some kind of an abrasion, and it can ultimately go to the brain. But it causes incredible illness and even death. The discomfort, we watched a child that was dying and we've seen many children that the doctors told us it was because of what came through the parasites that were either in water they were in or off the ground that got into their blood and it came from not having protection on their feet.

So we know that food and water is critical but this is like smiles and shoes for Christmas because we're going to do cleft palate surgery. Here's what we're going to

ask you to do. These shoes that are literally made out of a synthetic material, they last a long time and they've got an adjustable-sized strap so if they get a little too big they can grow into them.

We want to give 200,000 children shoes for Christmas -- 200,000 pair. They're \$3.60 a pair so \$36, 10 children have shoes; \$72 and you've got shoes for 20 children; could you do that? Could you help us with a gift of \$144 and then 40 children have shoes?

Just break out what you can do. Say, "I'm going to help those children." Dial that number and take your bankcard and use it -- use it like you would a check or write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're sending it so we'll know we have the support. If you could possibly give \$500 or \$1,000 to help us do surgeries for two children, give them a smile, cleft palate surgery, let's give shoes and smiles for Christmas. Whatever you can do.

We're going to send you the beautiful "Heart of the Father" bronze if you make a gift toward this wonderful outreach of a \$1,000 or more, and some of you can do that.

Or if you make any gift we're going to send you the incredible devotional book -- I've never read one that is more inspirational than Sarah Young's *Jesus Calling*. A missionary family, a missionary that I'm telling you, listened to Jesus in the most precious and beautiful way. This is going to bless you beyond measure while you bless others with an expression of the love of God.

Please -- please make that call! Or go online and make the gift God put on your heart. It's real important that you do it and we're asking you to do it now. Thank you so much for doing it!

Begin video clip:

Begin clip:

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we take for granted such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes. For most of these children they've never owned a new pair of shoes and while that may seem minor in the light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections that could lead to crippling consequences, disease, and even death.

LIFE Outreach International has developed a durable all-terrain shoe especially made for the harshest conditions in children of all ages. By responding today you can help

life immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas shoes to 200,000 children around the world just in time for the holidays!

Your gift of \$36 will help provide 10 pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$144 will help provide 40 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

In appreciation of your gift be sure to request the bestselling inspirational devotional by Sarah Young, *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence*.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries and you may request the heart of father bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: With all my heart I ask you please, this really is your opportunity to do something, to take action.

Betty, giving these children shoes and the hearts that are open -- when I tell you, we've saved the lives of millions of children, we've given hope to millions, but we've led millions and millions to Christ because of what the missionaries have been able to do.

We're going to send you *Jesus Calling*, this devotional book will bless you. Thank you for your gift.

I want to say thanks again to our wonderful guests, to Faith Christian for the example and to the work and to One Heart. God bless you!

Join me in saying thanks to our guests.

Bless you, Mark!

Bless you, Mack!

Bless you, Kris! Thank you!

Thank God!

Thank all of you for helping us share the love of God not in word only but in deed!

Beth: Who can discern her errors, his errors? We can!

Announcer: Navigating the choices in our life -- tomorrow!