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Week 21

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Max Lucado

“Fearless Faith”

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by friends of Life Outreach International.

MAX LUCADO: So, ask the Lord to use these stories to strengthen you and to guide you and to instruct you. Truth is you're not alone. You may feel like you are alone, but just as God told Elijah, "I have other people, and you stay close to your Heavenly Father, and he's gonna bring those other people into your world to give you encouragement."

ANNOUNCER: Max Lucado invites you to follow the example of Elijah and live with unbreakable courage, next.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today," I'm Randy Robison, this is Blynda Lane.

BLYNDA LANE: Hello, Randy.

RANDY: Are you ready to do the first-ever interview with Max Lucado on his new book?

BLYNDA: First ever, I don't think that happens very often. That's pretty exciting to market, but "Unbreakable Courage," I need this.

RANDY: Do you?

BLYNDA: I do, I need this message.

RANDY: Why?

BLYNDA: Well, I--you know, think about when I--you get older and you just think, "Am I really gonna have an opportunity to ever need courage again?" You know, you feel like your courage is needed when you're younger to do all these crazy things.

Okay, I am somebody who--I jump out of planes. I go down--I scuba dive. I love those kind of things. I do love those things.

But it's funny, the courage that you need when you're my age is, am I going to know how to be a good mother-in-law? Am I gonna know how to close my mouth whenever my adult kids are making choices that I would think they don't need to make?

RANDY: Yeah, it's not necessarily about the courage to do these, you know, adventurous things, physical things. It's the courage to get through everyday life and face hard decisions and difficult relationships.

Welcome back, like, it's good to see you again.

MAX: It is so good to see you.

RANDY: So, I love that you look at one of your favorite Bible characters who is very human and brought some lessons to us in this latest book. Let's jump into that if we could.

MAX: Elijah has always been an encouragement to me and a source of--kind of an enigmatic figure who could do such extraordinary things and yet then emotionally go to such depths. He's never died, you know, taken up in a whirlwind, he was alone against the two most evil characters.

And there's a reason nobody names their kids Ahab and Jezebel, right? Yeah, because they were evil, and yet he was fearless against them. I mean, he stood them down. Just one story, one dramatic story after another, the best known is calling fire down from to consume the false prophets, the altar, and then taking on the 850 false prophets.

And then soon thereafter, just disappearing into the mountains, ready to--literally suicidal, ready to take his own life. And I think it's very practical for today because of the day we live in, Randy, you know, the--we've got struggles around us, we've got struggles within us. We often feel outnumbered ourselves just like Elijah was. We often find ourselves on that emotional roller coaster, enjoying God's presence one day and then wondering where he is the next. I call it unbreakable courage because he didn't break. He bent. He did, but he didn't break. He finished strong, you know, and so, that's the reason we hold him up as such a great example.

BLYNDA: I love that you say that word bent and not break, because I think we feel like are we--are we able to show that kind of weakness that--you know, because I think about Elijah and I think how could he have seen such incredible miracles and then Jezebel kind of says one thing to him and he's--and he gets afraid, you know.

But then I--when I turn that on me and think about me, I think it doesn't take much. Sometimes I often think, I don't even know if I, you know, really have enough grit, you know, because it doesn't take much to discourage me.

But I love that you said like being--bending doesn't mean that we're out of the game. How do you learn to have that kind of courage? Is it all supernatural? Is there something that we're responsible for?

MAX: Where does it come from? Yeah, you know, he, Elijah was such a raw guy, wooly, he didn't have a lot of political correctness to him. We don't know a lot about his--where it came from. We know that he kind of came out of the rugged part of the world of his day, so much so they had their own distinct little accent.

Remember that phrase? What's your shibboleth? You know, that's a--that's an old way they would identify who the bad person was because nobody could say the word like they could, so it'd be kind of like a hillbilly or a redneck like yours truly, right? We have our own region, he kind of came out of a raw and rugged region, and somewhere in this wilderness upbringing he had, he had an encounter with God, and we're just not told what it is, but by the time we meet him, he has the courage to walk into the throne room of Ahab and Jezebel, who without a doubt are by far and above, the worst king and queen in Israel's history.

And at that point, God responded by saying, "Okay, I've got one guy. I've got an early version of John the Baptist I can send in there," and he just unleashed Elijah into their world, and he teaches us how to have that courage, how to have that strength. Our prayer is that we'll always be surrounded by people who are of like faith and keep us strong. But we're--that's not the truth. We're gonna find ourselves alone. We're gonna find ourselves struggling. We're gonna find ourselves needing courage. We're gonna find ourselves off in the distant land like a Canaanite land just like Elijah was.

There's just chock full of these stories, and I really think that the reason these stories are in the Bible is so that we can read them today and say, okay, on those--during those seasons that I feel beat up and done in, I'm gonna draw courage from the life of Elijah.

RANDY: All right, here's the hard question for me, because when I look at that and you mentioned the cultural upheaval, you mentioned the evil rulers, right? They have in Jezebel. I can look at that story of Elijah and go, okay, I can apply that to my life. I need to stand up against any evil in the world, and people say, "Things are worse today than they've ever been." And I'm like, no, not true. I mean just look at Elijah's life.

I can't, however, go kill a bunch of prophets of Baal, right? And Jesus kind of--he taught us a different way to even approach it but yet have the same courage, right? So, where do you go when you see some of these radical things in the Old Testament where they're slaughtering their enemies and things like that, and bring some core truths from that but through the filter of Christ as to how we stand against the evil today.

Is that a good question?

MAX: That's a great question because there are many people who kind of skip over some of the things in Elijah's story. Like he--destroying those 850 false prophets, and I don't get all that, but then again, I didn't live in that day and age and I don't wanna try to explain away the barbaric nature of that, but that was an era, that was a time and Elijah was being obedient.

What we can walk away from is--are the principles like obedience. Can you imagine what it would have been like to walk up to that altar where those priests are dancing around and you'd be the one who--the only one. You know, envision 850 priests, I mean 800--a room full of, and you're the only one, and they want you--they would just soon you be dead, and then he takes them on. That's the kind of courage that I think that God wants to give us in this day and age.

I think we're living in a day that is seeing some fruit of prayer. I think we're seeing some answered prayer, but I don't think we live in a culture that is friendly to our faith. I do believe we live in a society that is trying to make money off of disbelief rather than foster belief. I love the wonderful things that are happening, the revivals that we're hearing about. Wonderful ministries like yours that are fruitful, touching lives all over the world. I love reading about revivals, even in Iran, hearing about the underground revivals taking place.

So, I'm not at all one who is despairing of the day we live in, yet I'm not naive either. I mean it is tough to live with a phone that a young person is two clicks away from seeing pictures no man should ever see, or no person, especially no young man, so it's an odd era in which we live. So, let's equip one another. And the purpose of books like the story--of this story of Elijah, here's a picture of a guy who truly was outnumbered. I mean, he was the only person that he knew of faith.

Later on in the story, God will say, "I have more here, but I've just not revealed them to you yet." For most of his ministry, I mean, it was just him and his lonesome, right? He didn't have a church office to go to and 300 people would come listen to him preach. I mean he kept looking over his shoulder. No one was following him, but he was faithful. He never did give up, and that's what I think is so imitable about Elijah.

BLYNDA: So, when I think about that story, he has this incredible miracle that happens, then he gets a little bit afraid and runs into the wilderness. And I always love the fact that in the Scriptures, it talks about that basically Jesus or God sent an angel to give him food and a nap, you know, that's always--

MAX: Food and a nap.

BLYNDA: A little snack and a nap, because we all need that. But there's a part of that where he goes away into some silence and solitude. And that's kind of when he gets that refreshment from the Lord to say, "Hey, you're not alone. Don't you know that back there are all of these people who serve me?"

Was there something important about--I always thought of his running away as cowardly, but in a way, God met him in that--in that place and really built some more courage in him.

MAX: We are surprised that he ran away though, aren't we? You know, after what he had just seen after seven years of drought come to an end. After he prays and sees a cloud like--what does it say, like a fist in the sky, the prayer of a distant fist I've heard it called. He did

so many good things and then like I say, Jezebel is angry at him and he just collapses and he goes off for weeks, for weeks, and he wants to die.

I can't say that I have ever been like that. I can say that I have grew up in a home of a mother who battled depression, and I would watch her mood swings. And now looking back in those days--she was born in 1916, right, so she she lived in a day that it wasn't discussed and wasn't--and consequently wasn't treated. And I thought I wish I had known the story of Elijah to tell her, because she would take--she called 'em the blues, say I got the blues today, Max. And Dad would give us kind of a look of the eye like let's don't--you know, leave her alone, leave her alone, you know.

And I've experienced exhaustion. I think y'all both have. I know you have. What part of Elijah's downcast spirit was some form of depression, or what part of it is just being exhausted? But it's so much to glean from that story, and you pointed it out that God sent an angel to him. He did not think he was worthy of an angel, but then he was--he was ministered to by God, and he was given food and told to rest. Couldn't it be more practical than that, you know? And then probably somebody today who just says--you know, the holiest thing you can do today is take a nap. Just give your family a break, go take a nap. You know, eat a good meal, you know, so those those kind of stories and illustrations come out of the life of Elijah and I think that's why we like it so much.

RANDY: One thing I do appreciate as hard as parts of the Old Testament can be, even some of the harsher, you know, prophets are reading Jeremiah or something, you know, and at the end of it, though, God always, always, even to evil people, even to the people that have broken the covenant over and over and over and forsaken him and he calls them spiritual prostitutes and, you know, the prophets call them spiritual pro--all these harsh things.

There's always hope and there's always an invitation for people just to come back to God, and I think that's the beauty of his nature. And of course in Christ, it really opens the door for that. Do you see any hope for hope and for maybe some stability when you look even at Elijah's story?

MAX: I think that these stories in the Old Testament are really well read understanding the Abrahamic covenant, you know, that God made a covenant with Israel and that through Israel, the world would be blessed and that God was fiercely protective in those times in which Israel did not behave like covenant people. He let them endure the consequences.

And then also there are times in which people were leading the children of Israel away, astray sometimes from within like Ahab, Ahab and Jezebel, other times from without. And God was protective of them to the point where we today say how--it's a little barbaric, a little over that, but again, who am I? He's made a covenant with these people ,and through these people, he is going to bring Jesus Christ into the world. Through these people the Scriptures are going to come, the church is going to be born, the apostles are going to teach.

And so, and I believe God's not finished with the Isra--with the Jewish people, with Israel. And so, he's going to be protective of them, and sometimes that's gonna puzzle us, but Elijah was--but thanks to Elijah, he had schools of prophets he could teach at the end of his life, right? When he was taken up in a whirlwind, he visited three different, they call them schools of prophets, or maybe little training centers for prophets, so a revival of sorts had taken place in Israel. And once again, Israel was back on track. I don't think we're overstating the case when we say that Elijah was used by God to keep Israel from going off the cliff.

Think of a city where it's just poisonous and toxic and prostitution, child abuse, gambling, whatever it is, Israel was that and more. Israel, these are the chosen people. And so, God sent a strong person to bring them back.

BLYNDA: And so today, what would you say to the person who is wanting to live a courageous life, what freedom does that bring them? What victory does that bring them?

MAX: Yeah, well, first, it's an honor to talk to you, if you're this person who's trying to be the only Christian in your family or the only person of faith in your school, or everybody else at work is, you know, carousing on weekends and you're trying to be a woman or a man of God every day. God bless you. God bless you.

I think what you need to do or I would encourage you to do is look at these stories, not just of Elijah but of people like Joseph and people with faith like Job or Esther. The Bible is full of these people who found themselves outnumbered in the world, because truth of the matter is people of faith are outnumbered. And so, go to these stories, let them instruct you.

You know, for example, in the life of Elijah, he prayed courageous prayers. He prayed over the body of that dead boy. What a powerful prayer. He saw rain before rain came. He anticipated the answer to his prayer. He stood up against 850 false prophets in the presence of thousands of people because his faith and his belief in God mattered most to him. So, ask the Lord to use these stories to strengthen you and to guide you and to instruct you. Truth is, you're not alone, you may feel like you are alone, but just as God told Elijah, I have other people and you stay close to your Heavenly Father and he's gonna bring those other people into your world to give you encouragement.

RANDY: You know what I love about those big stories, you know, the big events is that they happen because the character in Scripture had everyday courage, and that's where it starts. And so, if you would like to start with some everyday courage, you can get Max's book, "Unbreakable Courage" and join us in something that is so close to our hearts which is sharing God's Word, not just in word but in deed. We do that by reaching out to those who are in desperate need.

[music]

ANNOUNCER: Across parts of Africa, the rains have stopped, crops are failing, and families are running out of food. For mothers, the fear is unbearable, watching their children grow weaker with each passing day. Adding to this food crisis is the fact that emergency aid normally available in rural clinics is now critically depleted. And for children like Rikilson, the consequences of this drought are already being felt.

ISAK PRETORIUS: This is a picture of crisis because of drought. When we say to you crops have failed, when we say mothers are telling us that they don't have any food, that they can't feed their children, Rikilson is the picture of what that looks like.

Unfortunately, you can see how many mothers are here. Mothers that have gathered in this area desperately looking for food, looking for help, asking, "Please, can anybody help us?" Because they need to feed their children, they know what comes next.

As malnutrition sets into these little bodies, they understand what happens, it comes like a silent killer and steals their lives. But we can change that. You and I can change that if you'll open your hearts, if you'll partner with us, if you'll say, "Yes, I'll give that gift today, I'll do what I can do." I promise you that we will do everything we can do to save these precious child's lives and to answer their mother's prayers.

[music]

RANDY: You know, most of us can't imagine being in a situation where we're desperately looking for help, desperately looking for just something to eat, but that's the reality for so many.

BLYNDA: It's the reality. How can you not see when they're measuring the child's arm and there's just nothing there and you just think--and they've got the distended belly, which is a sign of malnutrition. It's--all of that is so sobering to see.

And then it shifts into them holding these red bowls full of food and this is where we come in, this is the role that we play, is we get to take that child from being malnourished and giving them food, and it's just so beautiful that I know that if I give a little, lives are being changed a lot.

RANDY: A lot.

BLYNDA: But God does more with what I--the little I give, he does so much more.

RANDY: He does and then there's also the reality of the people that you've seen that are in place right now. We've been doing this for literally decades now, and we've seen great success. I mean, the success stories are so encouraging.

And however, when I walk into a village and I see some of the things that Blynda has talked about, you see the skin that has turned a little bit or the hair that has turned red, which is not natural for them, the bellies, all the issues, the thin arms, all these things that we see, it

would be very difficult if I didn't know, okay, we have the solution for this, we have the Mission Feeding program, we have clinics as a last stop effort to prevent a child from dying.

But with the Mission Feeding program, we know we can take it to them where they need it, to the villages where because of drought or famine or displacement or some other cause that's completely out of the hands of these people that work so hard, we can go in for a period of time, however long that is needed to be, and stabilize the situation by giving them food. Stabilizing their health so that they they don't worry about what we're gonna eat today. They can focus on the future. They can focus on working, on education. That's how we get these people out of that cycle of desperation.

But here's my question for you today, for that mother who's desperately looking for something to eat for her child, not even for herself oftentimes, but for her children, will she find it? She will if we continue to provide it. We will continue to provide it because we have the workers in the field. We have the systems in place on the ground if we have your support, because it takes all of us, takes all of us coming together to say yes, the children that needed a meal yesterday will get a meal tomorrow.

So, I'm inviting you into that right now. Average \$30 will help feed 3 children for the next several months, \$100 will help feed 10 children, \$1,000 will help feed 100 children. Some of you, you may be able to give \$5, \$10, I don't know. It's really not about how much we can give, it's how we give. I want you to give with a cheerful heart. It will express God's love to someone, so please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can.

ANNOUNCER: Right now across the continent of Africa, children are suffering, facing severe malnutrition and even death. With food reserves critically depleted and many areas experiencing devastating famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us every single day.

Through Life's mission feeding outreach, your gift of love can be an answer to a prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for 3, 5, or 10 children for 3 full months.

With your gift we'll send you "The Father's Heart" devotional. Drawing from Scripture and his past, James Robison takes you on a 90-day journey to help you experience a deeper, more personal relationship with God as your loving Father. With your gift of \$100 or more, you will receive The Father's Heart bundle. This stationary set, paired with the devotional, is a thoughtfully-designed collection created to help you share encouragement, prayer, and the love of our Heavenly Father with those you care about.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more, which will help feed 100 children in desperate need, request Life's beautiful bronze sculpture, The Good Shepherd. So, please call, write, or make your gift online today.

JAMES ROBISON: In this area right now, we've been feeding long enough to actually see a school established here around the feeding area, a school under the trees, and these children are not facing immediate death. Some of them are malnourished, most have been stabilized. They're now going to school. We keep the feeding program going here where they're going to school because it keeps them coming to school, so it gives them a bright future.

So they've--we've literally gone from areas like this where the children would have reached down here and they would have gotten this soup mix like this and they would have brought dirt and all up to their mouths to eat it, they were that hungry. And then we've watched them, over the years, climb into barrels to try to scrape the remaining mix out because they could tell we were running out, and that's all we had.

And Betty's prayer years ago that our line to feed them would be longer than the line coming to get the feed has been answered by people like you. We don't ever want that to change. We want the line to feed them longer than the line to be fed. We don't want them going down here in the dirt trying to get a little bit of food in. We want them to go to school. There are areas where children are still facing death every day if we don't help them. Then there're the areas where we stabilize it like this, and we wanna keep the feeding going, and that depends on you.

RANDY: We do need to hear from you, and really, I'd love to hear from you today, so please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. Do you feel more encouraged today? Do you have that?

BLYNDA: I do, because think about it, there's courage, but to have unbreakable means there's gonna be some really hard things coming against you, and you're not gonna crack. I love it. I'm not gonna break.

RANDY: I think it's possible, thank you, Max.

MAX: Thank you both, it's terrific to be with you.

BLYNDA: Thank you for coming.

RANDY: Appreciate all you guys being with us. Please join us again next time here on "Life Today." If you miss any of our programs, visit lifetoday.org, they're all there for you. We'll see you again next time.

[music]

♪ Oh, you can't hear me cry ♪

♪ See my dreams all die ♪

♪ From where you're standing ♪

♪ *On your own* ♪

♪ *It's so quiet here, and I feel so cold* ♪

♪ *This house no longer--* ♪

ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ: So, God allows bad things to happen to us, but he's not going to leave us in that pit but--

ANNOUNCER: Anne Graham Lotz reminds us that God won't leave you there.

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