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*Week 27*

*Randy Robison & Blynda Lane*

*Kyle Idleman & Mark Moore*

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

**KYLE IDLEMAN:** So following Jesus in this--as a Messiah means recognizing that everything is spiritual, and if you can put those lenses on, if you can start to look at your life through this idea that everything is spiritual, that everything is a part of following Jesus, it does the opposite of constricting you. Instead, it sets you free.

**ANNOUNCER:** Kyle Idleman and Mark Moore reveal "The Missing Messiah, next on "Life Today."

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**RANDY ROBISON:** Welcome to "Life Today." I'm Randy Robison. We are back today with a couple of gentlemen. They're discussing some things that--it's some meat, spiritually. So, you know, get your knife and fork out and be ready, but it is so good, and it will--this is spiritual growth. I don't know where you're at, but I know you will benefit from this conversation.

If you missed the first conversation, go to [lifetoday.org](http://lifetoday.org). All the programs are there. But we're talking about "The Missing Messiah," which is the title of a book by Kyle Idleman and Mark Moore. It's available now wherever you get books. We'd love to send it to you, and we'll tell you how.

But what is missing? Sometimes I know you feel like something is just not quite right. You read Scripture, you see what's possible, what people say, whether it's Jesus's words or Paul or another writer, and yet you're like, "There's a gap between where I'm at and where I think I should be." Well, we might have the answer for you today. Gentlemen, welcome back to "Life Today." Good to see you guys.

**MARK MOORE:** Thank you, thank you.

**RANDY:** I know this is like a little bit of like--well, for here, green room talk, or pastor study talk, but the implications of understanding all that Jesus did and wants to do, whew, it's radical. It's revolutionary.

This is life-changing, you know, stuff we're talking about here. Give us a little bit of an overview, for people that may have missed the first program, of what this means.

**MARK:** You're right, it is revolutionary. So if you're just now tuning in, "The Missing Messiah" is a book that Kyle and I have worked on together, and what is missing is this idea that the Messiah is not merely your Savior of your soul for eternity, he is your Lord and King today. But the problem is, we don't have kings today. I mean, King Charles, but let's be honest, he's not a real king.

And you watch these Disney shows and we've got kings and lords, but what does that actually look like? And what we're trying to get at here is we have a church in a culture here in the West that has been individualized, personalized, monetized, and so, the churches are catering to individuals' needs to get people to come. And I don't know about you, but I just feel like there's got to be more to the church than just going one day a week. There's got to be more to a Bible study than, you know, intellectually parsing out a verse.

It has to affect my family and my marriage. And I know Kyle and I both serve in churches where we see thousands of people come, and they're searching for answers to life, and they want a Jesus to be--I love the way you put this. He's not your life coach, he's not your counselor, he is a Lord. And if all we want out of Jesus is what we need out of him and don't turn it around and say, "What do you need from us?" we're gonna be missing the lordship part of Jesus the Messiah, and only clinging to the savior part.

**RANDY:** Well, and even that term "Lord" is not one I would use outside of the church. It's this very English thing in my mind, I don't know. But one way that you do put it that I totally get is you talk about us going from being a fan to a follower.

And I think a lot of people would say, "Yeah, I love Jesus, he's great," you know. "He's my Lord," you know.

But we're not truly followers, you would say, in a lot of cases. What does that mean?

**KYLE:** I think about it like this, that we want to be close enough to Jesus to get the benefits, but not close enough that it requires anything from us. And that is not part of the invitation. Like, the real Jesus who invites us to follow him doesn't put that option on the table.

The way I'd like to think of this from a fan standpoint is like, if I have, you know, if I cheer for a certain team and I know a certain athlete, I can know their stats, I can cheer for them, but it doesn't mean that I know him, doesn't mean that we're close. I just happen to know a lot about him. And recognizing that that we can do this with Jesus, so we can just kind of settle for that fan approach to our faith.

In the book I talk about taking my daughter, when she was young, to this business, a place called Build-A-Bear. Are you familiar with Build-A-Bear?

**RANDY:** Sure.

**KYLE:** And so, you know, you go through there and you get to, you know, you pick your bear. You pick whether you want it, you know, squishy or more firm. You pick what kind of sounds you want it to make, you know. Like, you go through and you customize it.

And the fan approach to Jesus is that approach, to say, "I'm going to make Jesus in my image. I'm gonna put together Jesus in a way that's most comfortable for me." Mark alluded to this. Like, an example would be, you know, Jesus as a political mascot, where I'm gonna follow a Jesus who just reinforces all my political beliefs and agendas, and isn't it weird that he always agrees with me?

But that's the Jesus I decide to follow. Or maybe it's the life coach Jesus, where we think the purpose of following Jesus in faith is self-actualization. And so, recognizing that we--we can all do this, we all have this tendency, to do a Build-A-Jesus approach, where we customize it in a way that's most appealing to us, but it can miss out on what Jesus invited us to in following him wholeheartedly.

**RANDY:** I think another similar thing that we tend to do is it becomes very transactional. For example, I've had someone say, "You know, I've had these problems in my life, and so I started going to church, and I went to a men's group twice, and I've been tithing, and my problems haven't gone away." That's very common.

I mean, I think we've all made that mistake at some point.

**MARK:** That's the most common.

**RANDY:** Is it the most common?

**KYLE:** Yeah, we see people come to our church, and, "If I pray enough, if I give enough, if I serve enough." But transaction never leads to transformation, because we're asking the wrong question. We're asking, "What can Jesus give to me?" rather than, "What will Jesus demand from me?" And Jesus doesn't want to improve your life.

He wants to end your life so that you can have a new life.

**RANDY:** Yeah, right, yeah. You want the other part of that. So, what does Jesus require of me, really?

**KYLE:** Let's imagine that you've got a dresser, a chest of drawers. And each drawer in that chest of drawers represents a certain area of your life. So one of them maybe is marriage, one of them is the parenting drawer, one of them is your political drawer, one of them is your financial drawer, and one of them is your faith drawer, spirituality drawer. What most of us do is we approach following Jesus, and we open up our spiritual drawer, our faith drawer, and we're fine with rummaging around in that drawer, but these other drawers are off limits.

When you follow Jesus, what you're saying is, "Okay, Jesus, you're not just gonna be the drawer in my life, you're gonna be the dresser that all the drawers fit into." And so, one of the challenges that I have oftentimes as a pastor is I'll come over here and I'll open up somebody's finance drawer. And they're like, "Hey, what are you doing? That's not my spiritual drawer." Like, yeah, because everything is spiritual. And so, following Jesus in this--as a Messiah means recognizing that everything is spiritual, and if you can put those lenses on, if you can start to look at your life through this idea that everything is spiritual, that everything is a part of following Jesus, it does the opposite of constricting you.

Instead, it sets you free. And so, the shift, though, and what's it mean to actually following Jesus, is recognizing--moving from a drawer approach to a dresser approach, that he's not just going to get the drawer, he's gonna get the whole dresser. He's what everything else fits into.

**MARK:** Kyle doesn't know this, but a week ago Sunday I preached that message. I actually had a file cabinet, and I opened it up, and I labeled. And then I confessed to our church one of the drawers, and there's more than one, that I don't have open to Jesus. So to illustrate the point, I had a label that said "reputation." And I know that I haven't given my reputation over to Jesus, because when someone writes me an email that might be a little toxic, I begin in my mind to spin an answer so that it'll make me look better and prove that they're wrong.

Or when my wife says, "Why did you do that?" I begin to--I mean, I Rolodex backflips when that happens, just to make sure that my reputation--because I do trust Jesus with my reputation, but not fully, because he can't care about it as much as I do. Making Jesus the Messiah means you've already died to yourself. See, it doesn't matter what anybody else says, it matters what he says. And one of the questions in our last show, if people want to go back and watch it, one of the questions you asked is, "How does this--it sounds like legalism." No, this is so freeing.

This is not obligation. When you give every drawer over to him, you're just the manager. CEOs take the responsibility of the business home at night. Workers don't.

**RANDY:** So how do we 100% everything, every drawer in that cabinet, right?

**MARK:** I've long since given up on 100% of anything. So when I preach, I used to say, "I just wanna preach for an audience of one." That's never been true, because there's always, you know, somebody I care about. But what I have done is worked on the percentages. I'm now down to about five people's opinions that I care about when I preach. I would love to get it to one, that's not realistic.

I would love to give 100% of my life. That's not realistic. But if I could preach a sermon that was, let's say, 87% for God's glory and only 13% for my satisfaction--I'm working on the percent. Does that make sense? So look, if you're watching, we're not trying to say it's all or nothing.

We all want to give all of it, but that's not realistic. Could you, today, give 1% more? Could you open up one more drawer for Jesus? That's what this book is after.

**KYLE:** I agree with that, but I also want to push back a little bit. Like, if you say on your wedding day to your spouse, "Hey, here's my vows, I am--I'm 95% in," right?

**RANDY:** Or 87% in his case.

**KYLE:** But there's 5% of it--that's what I mean. But my point is that what Mark said is right, is that you're growing towards that. You've got to recognize that you're growing towards that kind of commitment, but your expression or your determination is all in.

Like, what you're working towards is that. Like, where we become, to his point, where we become discouraged and maybe overwhelmed or frustrated or shame-filled is when we don't recognize the journey of this, and so we feel like, "Oh, I'm not where I should be, so I'm not gonna do it at all." And that's not the invitation.

The invitation is a journey invitation. Following Jesus means, "I've moved further today than I was yesterday."

**RANDY:** You're right.

**KYLE:** And until we meet him face to face, we're gonna be on that journey.

**RANDY:** Yeah, no, it's not about being at the destination, it's the direction you're moving, I believe.

**MARK:** And my wife would be delighted with 87%, by the way. But she does expect--I mean, yeah, I've committed 100%. I love that illustration.

**KYLE:** Well, yeah.

**RANDY:** Well, and that goes to the point in your book. You know, the title of Jesus, what the disciples called "rabbi," which is a very Jewish term, right, just means teacher, and isn't that really what we're doing, is we're allowing Christ to teach us?

And not just hearers of the Word, but doers?

**MARK:** Yeah, and of course, we in the West think of teaching as academic and intellectual. You couldn't be a student of Jesus and not walk behind him and imitate him.

So I think a "mentor" might be a better term, and "apprentice" might be a better term than "disciple," because it's not about knowing more stuff, it's about imitating him more closely.

**RANDY:** Okay, I know you're pastors, so I know the answer, but you know, can't I just do-- can I at least do this online and not actually come to your church, right? Do we really need community for this?

**KYLE:** You just think about what you can't be obedient to unless you're a part of a community. For example, like, we are commanded, you know, to love people, love people who are difficult to love. That's really hard to do if you're--it's hard to do that online.

We're encouraged and challenged to, you know, encourage one another and spur one another on. We're told to pray for one another. Like, so many of the "one another" commands require another.

And so, recognizing, like, "Okay, if I'm gonna be obedient to these things and following Jesus, I can't do that without community. I can't do it by myself."

**RANDY:** Do we tend to personalize some teachings of Jesus, do you think, that really are more community? I know you've got an example in your book.

**KYLE:** Yeah, in the book I talk about, you know, one of my heroes of the faith is a pastor, a Haitian pastor, that I've got to spend, you know, quite a bit of time with over the years. His name's Edry.

And yeah, we were living in Haiti for a few months and I was just spending mornings with him having coffee, and we started talking out of Luke 12 about the parable of the man who tore down his barns and built bigger barns.

**RANDY:** Because he had a lot.

**KYLE:** Because he had a lot, yeah. And he said to himself, "I know what I'll do with my extra," you know, "I'm gonna tear down these barns, I'm gonna build bigger barns." And as I was reading--we were both kind of talking about our interpretation of that parable, and as I was reading that parable, you know, I kind of had this very Western approach to it that says, "Well, it's not about the barns," you know, "this is a question about priorities." And I individualized it immediately.

And he read that parable, and he read it in the context of community, that he immediately heard that and thought about the people who were in need in his community, and if he's tearing down his barns and building bigger barns while the people in the community are in need, like, that's the issue.

**RANDY:** That's the foolish man.

**KYLE:** Yeah, that's the foolish man. And he read it through a lens of community, and I read it through a lens of, you know, just personalization.

**RANDY:** I think we do that a lot. I think, though, that there is something seriously key about saying, "I'm going to do what you said, Christ.

I'm going to follow in your footsteps and care for the needy, the overlooked, the poor, the downtrodden, the ones the church doesn't like." I don't know, Mark, is there something that happens when we step out and literally follow Jesus's example, and reach into the lives of people that--

**MARK:** Yeah, it's called salvation. Matthew 25, the separation of sheep and the goats. What differentiated them--and I know, we're saved by grace through faith, and it's nothing we do to earn it.

But if you have received the heart of Jesus, then you will prioritize the people that Jesus prioritized. And I alluded earlier to touching the leper. I think that was one of the most definitive moments in all of human history, because up until that point, no religion had ever assumed that cleanness was more contagious than uncleanness.

**RANDY:** What do you mean by that?

**MARK:** They had always assumed if someone is dirty or sick, I touch them, the dirtiness comes to me. Jesus turned it around and said, "No, cleanness is more contagious than uncleanness." And when the church gets ahold of that, then the cleanness of Christ is the light that cannot be overcome by darkness, and we move into poverty and disenfranchisement and people who are ostracized, and it is our acceptance in the community of Christ that will morph the world around us into an environment that is clean, whole, and healthy.

**RANDY:** You know, I think it's important that we take that both spiritually and literally.

**MARK:** Yes.

**RANDY:** Yeah, because we touch those who are broken, who are hurting, and we also touch those who are maybe dirty and in need. And that really to me is the core, and there's so much fulfillment in that.

I just--

**MARK:** When we hoard resources for our own protection, we think that will make us happy. And you and I both know a lot of wealthy people. It does not.

Our greatest joy, Jesus said it, is more blessed to give than receive. And when you use your resources, time, talent, treasure, in ways that they were intended, it's like hitting a chord on a guitar that syncs, and you feel the spiritual reverberations of that.

**RANDY:** Yeah, it does. And you know, I think the beauty of it is that when we give what we have received from God, it doesn't dry up. Your cup runs over, you know?

You gotta be filled to run over, so that's the starting point. But I don't know, you know?

**MARK:** I like to say this to our church, that if God ever blesses you with anything, time or talent, God never blesses you because he loves you. He blesses you because he wants to love someone else through you.

**RANDY:** Oh, boy. Whew, okay. I think we can do this. I know we can. And if God's given you grace, give others grace.

If he's given you wisdom, give others wisdom. If he's given you the means to meet a practical need, we can do that. There's so much fulfillment in that. I know many of you get that, you've done that with us for years. But we've been doing this for years.

If you're new to this, I would just ask you to watch this, this little piece we've got. This isn't just an opportunity, and yes, it's important, it's critical, it's life-saving, life-changing, but it's not just those other people around the world whose lives will be changed when you give. I do believe it's yours. Watch this and you'll see how.

**JAMES ROBISON:** You know, it's hard to believe that these children here are actually drinking this water. It's absolutely filthy. As a matter of fact, you can see the cans here that are floating in the water.

This is what they were drinking out of when we walked up here. I mean, I want you to look how dirty that water is. This is what they're drinking now, if you can see that when I pour it out, I mean, it's just absolutely filthy.

**ANNOUNCER:** Many years ago, James and Betty witnessed firsthand a deadly problem that still plagues over two billion people today: lack of access to clean drinking water that results in waterborne illnesses and oftentimes death.

**JAMES:** That is what we're after. And that water will soon be clean, a steel-cased well. But this is Life, this is Water for Life right here.

Millions of people are dying for lack of clean water and because of waterborne diseases. Let's give them clean water.

**ANNOUNCER:** "Let's give them clean water." Those words have been the heart cry that inspired our mission teams to locate people in countries throughout the world who do not have access to clean water. Places like Eastern Europe, in isolated regions of the Amazon River of South America, into the highlands of Central America, then to countries in the far reaches of Asia, and finally back full circle to the region of the world where our mission first began, Southern Africa.

**RANDY:** Hey, Mom and Dad. I'm here in Burundi with John and the whole crew, because another well is going in the ground to give people fresh, clean drinking water, and it's so exciting.

I wanna say thank you to you for starting this, for being so faithful to it, and to all the viewers who have made Water for Life possible in so many desperate villages just like this one.

**ANNOUNCER:** Because of James's vision for people to have clean drinking water, Life Outreach and our partners have drilled over 9500 wells, serving nearly 10 million people. And yet the mission is far from over, knowing that people are still suffering and dying simply because they lack clean drinking water.

But with your continued support, we can reach millions more who are in such desperate need.

*[music]*

**RANDY:** It's one of the highlights of my life to be able to stand there and watch one of those water wells being drilled, and when that clean water comes out of there and those children dance in the artificial rain as it spews out of there, the smiles. But I'll tell you what's interesting about that as well is, yeah, you see the children dancing, playing, having a good time. But if you look over at the parents and at the grandparents, you know what you see? You see relief. You see a spark of hope. You also see the pain, because they remember the ones that they've lost when they didn't have clean drinking water. Yes, I wanna thank all of you who have been a part of Water for Life. Let's not stop. When my parents started that decades ago, you know, I kind of grew up watching that. When I got to see it for myself, God really put it on my heart that this is the gospel in action. This is a calling for all of us, not just me, not just my parents. We're committed to it.

I hope you will commit to it. It's very, very simple. An average well is \$4800. That's getting the equipment there, that's drilling down as far as we have to drill. Some places it's pretty shallow, some places it's very deep. Constructing a well that will last an average of 70 years, putting a pump on it so that it's covered. You'll see wells across these areas that are uncovered. Well, they just get contaminated. We do these right, because we want to give people water for life. That's what you do when you join with us. If you can give a well, gift of \$4800 today, please do it.

If you can give five or ten, I would encourage you. I'm telling you, this is an investment in lives and in the gospel, in the water of life, Jesus Christ. Maybe you can come together with others. A gift of \$48 would serve ten people clean water for life. A gift of \$144 will give a water well to an average of 30 people. Whatever you can do today, we've got some wonderful gifts we'd love to put in your hands. In fact, we have "Prayers for Physical Health" and we have "Prayers for Spiritual Health." And today if you request "The Missing Messiah," we would love to send that to you. But these are just reminders of your part in sharing God's love with other people, by providing that need, by being the hands and feet, going where the need is, reaching out with an open hand and giving, which is better than receiving. So will you do something, whatever God puts on your heart? You will be blessed

by him in a way that he wants to bless you the most. So go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can.

**ANNOUNCER:** Every day, far too many lives are lost to waterborne disease, and tragically, children under the age of five are the most vulnerable. Through Mission Water for Life, you can give desperate mothers hope and precious children a future by helping provide clean, life-giving water before it's too late. Our goal this year is to drill 350 water wells in areas where the need is greatest, but it won't be possible without you.

Today, your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10, and \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime. In thanks for your gift of any amount, we'll send you "Prayers for My Spiritual Health." This beautifully crafted prayer book will meet you in the places where anxiety, grief, and spiritual weariness run deep, guiding you through prayers for inner peace, emotional healing, and intimacy with God.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "Your Life of Prayer" bundle. This collection includes "Prayers for My Spiritual Health," along with "Prayers for My Physical Health" and the "Life Prayer" journal, three companions to help strengthen your walk with Christ. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well, and request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

**RANDY:** We really do need to hear from you today. You can make such a difference. I hope you'll do it. You'll be blessed. I promise you, God will bless you in ways that he wants to, and that's a beautiful thing.

If you'd like to request "The Missing Messiah" by Kyle Idleman and Mark Moore, do that. We'd love to send it to you. Thank you guys both for being here. And for people that wanna follow up with you guys, Kyle on social media, Mark, [markmoore.org](http://markmoore.org).

**MARK:** That's right.

**RANDY:** I love it. Appreciate you guys. Appreciate all you guys out there watching. We'll see you again next time on "Life Today."

*[music]*

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**MALE:** We don't need to be afraid of evil, but we need to understand the role that it plays, and that we are in the midst of a battle, whether we want to be or not.

**ANNOUNCER:** Next week.

**ANNOUNCER:** "Life Today" is made possible by the supporters of Life Outreach International. Your gift will be used exclusively for the exempt purposes of Life. The ministry features specific outreaches as examples of the programs it supports and conducts.

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