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Week 42

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Jennifer Rothschild

"Heaven Starts Here"

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

JENNIFER ROTHSCILD: I think I had such a self-centered view of heaven that I had this thought that, you know, Jesus died just so that I can go to heaven someday. But really, though that is true, Jesus died so that he could bring heaven to me on this day, because we want his kingdom to come, his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

ANNOUNCER: Jennifer Rothschild offers a different perspective on heaven.

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RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today", I'm Randy Robison. Blynda Lane's with me, how are you?

BLYNDA LANE: Man, I am so happy to be sitting in this chair with you today.

RANDY: Well, I'm glad you're here.

BLYNDA: Yes, it is, it's really fun to be here, and especially because we get to talk about one of my favorite things to talk about today.

RANDY: We're not talking about me on this program, so--.

BLYNDA: Right, so you're just down a little bit, but above that a little bit is heaven. But I mean, you know, heaven, Randy.

RANDY: Heaven, okay, the place we all want to go, but not today.

BLYNDA: Well, you know, this is my thought though. I think we're gonna talk about it today, because we have amazing Jennifer Rothschild with us today. But what I love about heaven

is I don't think we talk about it enough, because if we did, if we fully understood it, we'd want to go there right now.

RANDY: Okay, so the title of Jennifer's book-- welcome Jennifer, by the way.

JENNIFER: Thank you, glad to be here!

RANDY: The title of the book is "Heaven for Today". And boy, this crosses into some theological things, but I think it's just scriptural. And the question I have is, how much of heaven-- I have a lot of questions actually.

How much of heaven is for today? What does it mean, "heaven for today"? Does that mean-- what does this mean?

BLYNDA: How do you engage heaven now?

JENNIFER: First of all, let me say this: Heaven literally is a place. It is a literal place. So I'm not--I don't want that to make anyone misunderstand that I'm saying heaven is a concept or an idea.

It is a literal place that we will go when we die in Christ. We will either be in the present heaven, if Christ has not yet returned, or if Christ returns, we will be in what I call the forever heaven of the new earth. So either way, our destination is heaven when we die.

But when I talk about heaven for today, it is an opportunity for us to engage the promise of heaven today before we get to the place of heaven tomorrow. And so, you know, one of the things I realized is, I think I had such a self-centered view of heaven and a self-centered view of even my relationship with Jesus that I had this thought that, you know, Jesus died just so that I can go to heaven someday. But really, though that is true, Jesus died so that he could bring heaven to me on this day, because we want his kingdom to come, his will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

And so that's what I'm talking about when I'm talking about, in this book "Heaven For Today", engaging that promise of heaven today. We don't have to wait for tomorrow to experience the joy and the fullness, we can experience it today.

BLYNDA: That gets me excited, that gets me excited.

RANDY: It does, okay, so you mentioned another word we spoke about in the green room earlier, kingdom. And how often did Jesus tell a parable and he would start it with, "The kingdom of heaven is like," or, "The kingdom of God is like," and he would put it in these

terms that we're supposed to grasp that I don't think we always do. But I don't think he was just taunting us with our lack of knowledge, I think he was communicating something.

So when I dug into the idea of kingdom, which is not a modern thing, at least not in America-- no kings, right--but what does it mean? Well, that was what the Jewish culture understood, and it goes to authority, it goes to rule and reign, power, protection, provision, all the things we saw in the original Promised Land, which was the original physical kingdom. So when I think of the kingdom of heaven, I do think of heaven in my life, in my home, in my community today, is that fair?

JENNIFER: Well, yeah, and I think you're speaking of a couple of things. Ultimately, you know what you're speaking of? The rule and reign of Jesus in your life.

And therefore, as his ambassador, as his kingdom citizen, everywhere you walk, boom, you're an ambassador of light, you're stamping out some darkness. But Jesus, when he came, he brought the kingdom at his first advent here on Earth. The kingdom came with Jesus, and so the kingdom is already here through us.

But it's also not yet. So there is going to be this great fruition of the kingdom where we truly, someday, in heaven, know as we are known, where the rightful king and ruler Jesus is ultimately worshiped by every tongue, every tribe. I mean, that's the kingdom right there, but here's the thing, we don't have to wait for that.

So we live it now, we live with that sense of purpose, we live with that sense of anticipation. Every day here on earth can be like this little slice of eternity where we open the window blinds of our heart and we peer closely, and we can see the reality of the kingdom of heaven right now in our lives.

BLYNDA: Practically, what does that look like?

JENNIFER: Practically what that means is that we experience our life here like what C.S. Lewis called "the shadowlands". It's the shadowlands, but what it represents is there is a greater substance to come.

I like to put it this way. We had this little dog named Lucy, and Lucy was a darling little Shih Tzu, and Lucy had this nasty little rope that she loved. I mean, it was chewed up and it smelled bad, and no matter how much I cleaned it, it was yucky.

And I would hold this rope and I would show Lucy. Lucy would see it, she'd get all excited.

I'd throw the rope and then I would point to it. Well, that sweet little dog would just stay at my finger and just keep panting at the pointer, and therefore she missed the point, so how do we engage--?

BLYNDA: So she's saying we're about as smart as a Shih Tzu.

JENNIFER: Well, that's kind of what I'm saying. I'm saying sometimes we look at the things on Earth and we think, "That's the point." They're pointers.

The joy that we experience here, the beauty of the petals of a blue hydrangea, it's a pointer, it's not the point. It's reminding us there is an insatiable beauty that will satisfy us in eternity someday. The tears we cry now, they hurt, but they're pointers.

They remind us of the ultimate point, that someday the lover of our soul will literally wipe every tear away. There will be no more sorrow, there will be no more pain. And so what I want us to be able to do is engage that reality now, because that is our birthright, so why not start living it now?

BLYNDA: So you tell a story in the book, and really some of the audience watching may not know fully your full story, but you tell a story when you were playing a board game with your son Clayton, and why don't you tell us about that, which you could integrate into your testimony of your life story?

JENNIFER: Well, our oldest son Clayton was only six years old, and at that point, me, his mom, had been blind for about fifteen years at that point. I lost my sight when I was a teenage girl, and-- because of a disease called retinitis pigmentosa. So by the time little Clayton was six years old, all he had ever known was that his mommy couldn't see, and he had begun to pray that God would heal my eyes, which I thought was beautiful.

And it also reflected that was his heart, literally, before a sandwich at lunch, "Dear God, please heal Mommy's eyes." I mean, he was so precious, so consistent. So this day we're playing a game on the floor, and it's a new game that we hadn't played before.

So of course I have to find very tactile games to play and this one, oh man, it was not going well. They were little marbles and little men, and I'm knocking them over and balls are rolling, and frustration is just growing in both of us, you could tell. And so I said to him, "Son, you need to get a different game that we could play.

And so, clean this up and get one you know we can play." He's dutifully picking up every little man, every little marble, he's silent while he's doing it. He puts the lid on the game,

and I could tell that this child had just been thinking so much, and so when he finally sealed the game, he broke the silence and he said, "Mom, I was thinking.

I don't think God is going to heal you here on Earth." And I was so surprised, because I knew how much he wanted his mommy to be healed. And I asked him why, and he said, "Because I think if God heals you here on Earth, you might love Earth more, and heaven is best."

What a perspective, and what an encouragement. I don't know if you've ever thought about this, but maybe it is God's mercy in disguise that some of your greatest longings are not met here on Earth, because God's reserving those deepest longings to be made whole in heaven someday, why? Because you might love Earth more, you might be satisfied with less.

But heaven is best, and where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. I just know that the promise of heaven is going to outlast the difficulty of the suffering here, and so when we can have that eternal perspective, and show enough trust in the Lord that perhaps that delayed answer is because there's a better answer in heaven, in that better country, it gives us the perseverance we need to live on this side of eternity until we are in heaven.

BLYNDA: That's what I was gonna ask, does the longing and understanding for how beautiful heaven is actually help us bring heaven to earth today? Like, does it help us live in that way, with that mindset?

JENNIFER: I think it does, because it gives us a deeper sense of purpose. And what it also does is it attaches us to the person of heaven. Because yes, heaven is a place, it is literally material, it is literal.

But it's not about the place, it's about the person. So when we're really grounded in our sense of eternity, that we know we're not just made for longevity, we are made for eternity, so our time here, it's gonna be about the person of heaven, so that not only do we get to go there someday to be with Jesus fully, though we're walking with him now through his Spirit, we have the opportunity with that sense of understanding and eternity and purpose, to draw others to the same Jesus. So we don't go home alone, we don't wanna go home alone.

RANDY: Earth is short, but heaven is long, and you mentioned that eternal perspective, but in my life, and I've seen it in others as well, that realization toward that became not just something you might have heard in church or in a song or whatever, where it became

meaningful and real was in the hard times. It was the most difficult time of loss, you know, years ago, for me, that my perspective began to shift to an eternal perspective.

And out of that came hope, came ministry, came comfort, all the things we actually want. I just can't help but wonder, and I'm curious your thoughts, when we face hard times or when we see other people facing difficulty, which sometimes can be harder than facing it ourselves if we're honest, do you think God may allow that to instill an eternal perspective in us so that we set our eyes on things above, not on things below?

JENNIFER: Oh, 100%, Randy, and boy, y'all have been through it too with just losing dear James lately. I will say this: Maybe the same reason that God allows us to suffer here to create that eternal perspective is the same reason that he didn't remove Paul's thorn, because perhaps Paul would have thought that was sufficient, but God gave him a deeper gift, which was grace. And so perhaps God allows us here to live with the hard things so that we can develop a perspective of eternity.

You know, there's no better verses in Scripture to me that really encapsulate this eternal perspective than 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Paul says to us, when we've got this perspective of seeing beyond this circumstance and seeing to our eternal home forever, "Therefore we do not lose heart, though outwardly we're wasting away." We all get that, right?

But inwardly, we're being renewed, and then Paul says, "Our light and temporary troubles are achieving within us a far greater weight of glory." Why can he say that, when cancer is not temporary, when blindness is not light? Because he's comparing it to something that lasts longer.

And though the burden may be heavy now, it is working within us and for us a far greater weight of glory. And then verse 18 of 2 Corinthians 4 says, "Why is that? Well, we're gonna fix our eyes, therefore, not on what is seen," like the hardship, the loss, the cancer, but we are going to fix our eyes on that which is unseen, because what is seen, thank you, Lord, even blindness is temporary, but what is unseen will last forever.

That's the perspective we need to engage every day, why? So that, just like Paul said in verse 14, so that we don't lose heart, so that we don't get discouraged, because life is good on this side.

Is it gonna be better on the other? Absolutely, but it's good here, when we've got the right perspective.

RANDY: You know, it's interesting that you talk about it being good here, the idea of heaven for today, because I'll be honest with you, the these questions of faith and God and heaven, I have asked, "Am I just kidding myself? Is this one grand delusion that we're all living under?" You know, I've read some books by atheists and they try to build this case sometimes.

And so I go, "Okay, I mean, am I just crazy?" But here's one of the things, just one of many, that make me go, "No, I'm not crazy, I think those other people are crazy," right? I have seen that hope that you're talking about bring the fruit of the Spirit-- shocker, right?

Not really-- of peace, of love, of joy, of gentleness, of kindness, to people who it just otherwise cannot be explained. And so I go, "Okay, there's some evidence for my faith, right?" I don't see all of it, but I have seen transformations that you just-- you can't deny, and why would you want to?

And when you lean into that, you start to feel the transformation in yourself. At least I have, okay? You've been through a lot.

You've had to ask a lot of the hard questions. What are some of the things that you have experienced that you feel more connected to heaven, even though you're not fully there yet?

JENNIFER: Sure, my first connection and attachment to heaven, to be very honest, was that I won't be blind anymore. I won't be blind, I will be able to see, I'll be able to dance, like, I can't wait. The other reason I was so attached to heaven was because my daddy's there.

And all of us have experienced someone we love has gone before us, and we miss them and we long for them, and the more I recognized that those were my biggest longings for heaven, the Lord began to really reshape and teach me that I actually have my deepest longing already met, and it's in Christ. Because it's okay to long to be reunited with your loved ones. It's okay to long for wholeness and health, we were designed for that.

Eden did not have tombstones, right? So we are designed for this, but we need to look at each of those things as an opportunity to seek the deeper longing and see that it's already been met in Christ. Perfect union with Christ through salvation has been met.

I am whole and healthy and free in Christ because of the truth of his Word. It has been met, my deepest longings have been met. And so I think what it begs the question is, then if

we're gonna go to heaven someday because of our relationship with Christ, you know what that means?

If he doesn't come back first, we have to die to get there. And I think that's where sometimes we get a little bit concerned. So I just wanna address that very quickly.

My mom and I just had this conversation. She said to me, "I'm not afraid to die, I'm afraid of the process of dying." And so I was telling her something I wrote in "Heaven for Today".

We don't know what it's like to die, so of course we fear anything we're not aware--we don't have certainty about. But what if we look at death like a birth? When my daughter-in-law was pregnant with her little baby girl, the only girl in the family, I remember feeling little Charlotte's elbow sticking out from her mama's belly and just thinking how that sweet little baby was so safe in her mama's womb, and she could move and she could dance around inside there because it was her world, and to her it was shelter and it was light and it was freedom and it was joy, and she had no idea that she was made for another world, and that someday she'd go through that birth canal and she would be born into the world that she was made for.

That is heaven to us. We might think this side, "Oh, this is shelter, this is beauty, this is light," and it's only because we have not been born yet into the world of heaven where we were made for, where we would be one with our Savior, with every tribe, with every tongue, free, known, and knowing, as we've always been known.

RANDY: I believe it, and they come out crying.

JENNIFER: They do come out crying, yeah, we will. The tears are okay, it's gonna be tears of joy.

RANDY: "Heaven For Today", I would love for you to get the book, and I'm gonna tell you how we would love to send it to you when you share a little heaven on this earth. I want to say one thing real quickly if I can. You also talk about ways we can connect to heaven, worship being a big way, right?

I think prayer is another great way, Scripture connects us to heaven. And some of you may be feeling that longing, maybe just working through some things. We have a telephone number if you wanna call, someone will pray with you, because I do think, again, prayer is a connection to heaven, and you can experience heaven in your life and then share it with others.

But right now we wanna show you how many of you, many of the viewers just like yourself, have shared heaven on this earth, and what does that mean? That means bringing God's will into people's lives. It means redemption, it means comfort, it means care.

We did that in 2025 and we're gonna update you on that, but we're doing it again right now, and we're going to invite you into that process. Watch this little story and you'll understand.

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TAMMY TRENT: It's so good for me to be back in Southeast Asia, to be in our Life Center. Look, the first time I came, there was so much work that needed to be done. It's so fun to come back here and to see exactly what has taken place.

It's been incredible change, it's amazing. I've walked into even some rooms and I just-- I'm overwhelmed to see the change that has taken place and to know exactly what God is doing in this place. I can feel the presence of God.

But let me also tell you, it could all be gone like that, why? Because they need our ongoing help to help continue moving things forward for them. So I'm just gonna simply ask this: Would you consider today coming alongside us to be a part of this beautiful Life Center here in Southeast Asia that is changing life after life after life?

We need your help today, it's urgent. Would you give that gift today so that these lives can be restored back to life again?

RANDY: You heard Tammy say the word "today" repeatedly. Why today? Because today, so many people are hurting, so many people are in need.

Today, evil is reigning in the lives of many, but we have the solution, and when I say "we", I don't mean just Life Outreach International, Tammy, our mission partners, I mean you. You are a part of the solution. You can reach, rescue, or restore a child today, simply with a gift.

Your financial support is every bit as important as the work in the field. \$128 will do that for a child. Many of you could reach, rescue, or restore 10 children with a gift of \$1280.

And as you can see, your gift means something. We do what we say we're going to do. We've been doing it for many years.

We know how to change a situation for a child. And Blynda, you know, I couldn't even watch some of the images that we see or consider this topic because it's so awful. I

couldn't do it if I didn't know that we have people who will reach out and say, "I want to be a part of the solution," and we see that life change.

BLYNDA: We see the life change, but what I think really struck me is, it would be tempting to see this beautiful renovated building and think, "Okay, fold the hands, the work is done, look what we did." And yes, it is true, that is something to celebrate. It's something to just be, "Thank you, Jesus," so celebratory about.

But it would be like saying, in a way, "Well, I ate yesterday so I don't ever have to eat again," you know? It's like, no, I need to eat every day because the need for my, you know, needs to be met is every day.

The same thing for--this atrocity is happening to young girls every single day, and it is not stopping. And we may not be able to save every young girl, but we can save some.

RANDY: Yes, we can, and that's the way we approach it, one life at a time. We'd like you to approach it that way. One, five, ten, whatever you can do, it will make a life-changing difference.

And so I would just invite you to pick up the phone or go online and make the best gift you can. Know that when you do, you will help reach, rescue, or restore a life today.

FEMALE ANNOUNCER: Every day, innocent children are being trapped in the wicked web of human trafficking. Instead of dreaming about a future, they are sold into a nightmare of sexual slavery. But you can join the fight against this evil.

Through Mission Rescue Life, you can reach at-risk children before traffickers do, rescue those already enslaved, and restore young lives with hope for the future. A gift today of \$128 will reach, rescue, or restore a precious child and change their life forever. Gifts of \$64 or \$32 will be combined with support from others to help deliver one more child from the shame and pain of sex trafficking.

With a gift of any amount, we will send you James Robison's final book, "A Life Proclaiming Freedom", as a thank-you for your support. Discover James's personal journey from bondage to freedom, share in his calling to bind up the brokenhearted, and learn how to experience your personal freedom so that you can bring healing to the hurting world around you. With your gift of \$128 or more, you will receive the "Life Proclaiming Freedom" bundle, which includes James's book, a special edition collection of the Gospels, and the beautiful Life planner.

Finally, your gift of \$1280 can help save 10 children from the horrors of human trafficking. With this special gift, you may request the inspiring bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd". Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

SHEILA WALSH: Vulnerable little children need three things: they need to be reached. We need to continue going into the villages, going into the places where children are vulnerable, and warning them, educating them. They need rescue.

We have talked with some of the most amazing SWAT teams that are going in and rescuing these little girls and seeing traffickers go to prison. But then the most beautiful part of this is this restore. Reach, rescue, restore.

We have seen where these girls are taken and they're loved. Is our work here over? Absolutely not.

I think it's never been more urgent. But we need you to continue this work. God is moving in the darkness and saving lives, one life at a time.

RANDY: We do hope to hear from you, and hope to hear from you today, you really can make the difference in a child's life. And when you do today, I hope you will request Jennifer Rothschild's book, "Heaven for Today". Blynda, what a great book.

BLYNDA: What a great book, and it's--I don't know if we mentioned, it's 60 devotions, so you can go through one a day, two a day, however you wanna do it, but Jennifer, this is such a great tool, thank you for writing it.

JENNIFER: Well, thank you for letting me share about it, and thanks for letting me be with y'all today.

RANDY: Well, thanks for bringing a little heaven to life today. We'd like to bring you more, so come back for more "Life Today", see you again next time.

BLYNDA: See you soon.

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MARK BATTERSON: I believe that you are the image of God, you are the apple of God's eye. But so is the person that you like the least.

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