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Week 46

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Andrew Farley

“Breaking The Law”

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by friends of Life Outreach International. Jesus came to fulfill the law, not abolish it. But what does that actually mean?

ANDREW FARLEY: Six hundred and thirteen commands of the Old Testament, that's burdensome. But these new commands, believe and love. Love covers a multitude of sins.

If I love you, I don't murder you. If I love you, I don't steal from you. If I love you, I don't cheat on you.

Love covers a multitude of sins. God is a genius, he's saying, "You don't need 613, you need my life."

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RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today", I'm Randy Robison. Blynda Lane joins me. Great to see you, Blynda.

BLYNDA LANE: It's so good to be here.

RANDY: Are you ready for this?

BLYNDA: You know what, I am, but this author, this book, it always makes my head kind of explode, it's so good. I'm saying that in the best way, it's so good, but I still--I wanna be challenged in my faith, and this book challenges me.

RANDY: Oh, well, we're about to grow, and we're inviting you on this, and I wanna tell you a couple things. Our guest is Andrew Farley. He is the pastor of the Grace Church here in Dallas, and is it an extension in Lubbock or is it--?

ANDREW: Yeah, we have two locations.

RANDY: Okay, so Lubbock as well. The book is called "The Impossible Teachings of Jesus", and we'll get into the title, but I want to tell you right now that this program today is not the complete discussion. There are two parts to this, so you'll have to come back, or you can always go to lifetoday.org to see all of the broadcast programs.

BLYNDA: We had to do two parts because it's that good.

RANDY: It is that good, and also because really the topic, there is a turning point. Again, we'll get into that. Welcome though, Andrew.

ANDREW: Hey, thank you so much for having me. It's great to be here.

BLYNDA: Well, we've had you on before, and it's--.

RANDY: And she still hasn't gotten over it.

BLYNDA: It's so good to have you back.

RANDY: Okay, so let's tee this up with kind of where you start, and the Sermon on the Mount. You call that something that I've not heard in church before. How do you refer to the Sermon on the Mount?

ANDREW: Yeah, it's a killer sermon. It is the impossible teachings of Jesus. That's a shocker for a lot of people, but that's the way Jesus intended it.

I mean, if we could just hit the pause button and be honest for a minute, cut off your hand, pluck out your eye, be perfect like God, give money to whoever asks of you, let people beat you up, turn the other cheek. Oh my goodness, who is actually obeying this sermon? And the answer is nobody, zero.

Zero human beings can fulfill this, and that's the whole point. It's the law on steroids. That's why Jesus is saying, "You have heard it said, 'Don't commit adultery,' but I'm gonna ratchet that up.

Even if you look at a person with lust, it is the same thing. You've heard, 'Don't commit murder.' Oh, bravo, you haven't killed anybody lately, bravo.

But I tell you, even if you get angry with someone, it is the same as taking their life." So suddenly the three-point line is out in the parking lot and nobody can make the shot, and that's the whole point.

RANDY: Okay, let me ask you about that because on the murder and then the hate, right, I have heard it said that all sin is sin, that God was basically equating hatred or anger with

murder, he's equating lust with adultery, and I'm sitting there going, "I think God's smarter than that." It's not really the same.

BLYNDA: But it is the way we've been taught.

RANDY: It's the way we've been taught, but-- so I mean, why do you think he was-- is it just to show that we've failed?

ANDREW: Yeah, I mean, it's just like Romans chapter 1, who survives? Who survives Romans chapter 1 with the standard of the law in your face? The problem is, guys, I think the average person in Jesus's audience, they were patting themselves on the back thinking, you know, "613 laws, you know, I'm kind of doing pretty good, I'm keeping most of it on a good day, maybe God'll grade on the curve."

And here comes Jesus the table-turner, the renegade, and he's turning furniture over in church, he's calling people snakes, whitewashed tombs, and they are just shocked at who is this teacher, and why is he proposing this standard that is insane? And that's why I called the book "The Impossible Teachings of Jesus".

BLYNDA: Okay, so for me, part of what my brain needed to get its head around, I hadn't ever thought of it in terms of when Jesus was delivering the Sermon on the Mount, you know, he's not yet had his crucifixion and resurrection, so he's actually not actually died for the sins of the world, so he's speaking to Jews, to their law that they understand, and so therefore he's actually speaking more instead of "Here's your list of things to do," he's more saying, "This is what you could only do if you were perfect, and let's present it in a way that is so big there's no way-- I'm supposed to make all of you believe," because he's trying to increase their need for a savior.

ANDREW: Exactly, exactly, and that's why, you know, verse 48, Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect," and if you don't understand perfect, "be perfect exactly like God is perfect." I mean, that is the culmination of the point he's making. And I mean, you could just hear the gulps in the audience, everybody with the big gulps in their throat, because they're confronting their self-righteousness.

They're realizing, you know, they thought they were marching up Mount Sinai and doing great achievements, and it turns out they're sitting at base camp. They're nowhere near the summit of law-based living.

And so they've been throwing parties with fireworks and presents and celebrations about this achievement to the peak of law-based living, and the reality is they haven't made any progress. And that's what Jesus is showing them.

BLYNDA: And in the book, is that what you call the collapse? Okay, so this is the collapse. It's a collapse of thinking, of a way that they've always thought?

ANDREW: Yeah, well, we have to come to the end of our own achievement, the end of ourselves, to realize, I mean, why is Jesus doing this? And if you haven't given it your best shot, I mean, I would just ask, all right, how many of us are giving money to whoever asks, because somebody could come to you and say, "Come on now, Matthew 5 and 6, give money to whoever asks without reservation. Are you doing that?

I heard you're a Christian." And then, you know, how many of us are praying for our enemies late at night, we're just in bed with these eloquent prayers, lifting up our enemies all the time? Are we gonna be honest about this and allow it to kill us, because the law kills, and then we see our need for God's grace.

Does that mean we're not gonna love people? Of course we're gonna love people, because Christ lives in us. But he's not trying to help us keep the Sermon on the Mount, meaning the Holy Spirit doesn't live in you to help you pluck out your eye, or cut off your hand, or be perfect in behavior.

That's not gonna happen. So it's like a shift of focus and a shift of source, saying, "Okay, he buried people before the cross under the law, and now, through the cross and resurrection, I have union with him, new life in him."

What is his goal? It's called the fruit of the Spirit, that's his goal.

RANDY: Okay, but hang on just a second, because I grew up and we had, you know, the Ten Commandments on the wall. I think in my public school we actually had it, at the private school for sure. I mean, isn't this how I'm supposed to live, by the law that-- I mean, the Ten Commandments still, they apply, right?

ANDREW: Yeah, so who's sitting here promoting murder or stealing or lying? I mean, you're right that the product of what God does in our lives, it doesn't fit with lying, cheating, stealing. But again, we're talking about source.

Is your source tablets of stone, or is your source the resurrection life of Jesus? And I would say to whoever is holding out, you know, they're grabbing a hold of those Ten Commandments like Linus with his blanket. I mean, are you keeping the Sabbath Friday night?

Do you ever send any emails Saturday? Do you ever do any yard work? And somebody said, "Oh, I don't mean the Sabbath."

Okay, so the Nine Commandments, is that what we're gonna do? So we're taking 613, we're tossing out 603 of them, calling it 10, then tossing out the Sabbath, then calling it 9, and then some of us are saying, "Well, we gotta have tithing back. Look, Ma, it's a new set of ten."

And so we start cherry-picking from God's law. What if we just said what Scripture says, "I've died to the law so that I might live to God, I died to the law so that I can bear fruit for God, and it's gonna be the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of the law"?

BLYNDA: Okay, but if you're somebody like me who, I like a little guideline, okay? I like some rules, so where does that fit in, that the Scriptures are there to be that path for us, because we have to, to understand Jesus's heart, his character, we do have to know what he stood for, what he-- and so if I just blanket that with, well, now that I have the fruit of the Spirit, all of my rules have to be, is it joy, is it peace, is it love, is it goodness, is it kindness, all of those things, versus, can I look at the Scriptures and go, "This is what I do"?

RANDY: Yeah, law 2.0.

ANDREW: Yeah, so--.

BLYNDA: I feel I'm being attacked on both sides.

ANDREW: Is it rules, is the New Testament instruction just a new law, a new set of rules? I would argue no, because you said two things. You said rules here, and then you also said his heart, who he is, what he's about, what he's doing in my life.

I would say yes to that second thing. It's not rules, it's letting Christ rule, and it's relationship where, yes, there's fruit, and yes, there's a result, but what's it coming from? It's not your favorite rulebook with your perfect rules chiseled out and the ones that are inconvenient deleted, and then you're left with, you know, 250 denominations because the rules are different for each one.

That's what's happened in Christianity, and all I'm saying is, let's go back to the behavior passages in the New Testament, is that law? No, because here's why. What if you disobey?

Well, under the law you deserve death. Under the law, you're condemned. Under the law, that's it.

I mean, we deserve the needle. Under the law, it's over, we're toast. But under grace, what it is is he's saying, "Look at you, you got a beautiful new heart, you got my life inside of you.

You're my child, you're raised and seated with me. We've got a vine-branches relationship here.

Now, how are you gonna walk? Are you gonna walk in a manner that's worthy of who you are, or are you gonna act like somebody that you're not?"

RANDY: Okay, but Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commands," so I mean, there's commandments, right?

ANDREW: Yeah, so the question is, what are his commandments? Did he say, "Hello, everybody, I wanna reissue the 613 to you from the Old Testament and I'm just a Moses add-on," or do we read in the New Testament, "These are his commands: to believe in him and to love others, even as he's loved us"? Now, if those are his commands, then suddenly when John says, "His commands are not burdensome," that makes sense to me, because 613 commands of the Old Testament, that's burdensome.

But these new commands, believe and love, love covers a multitude of sins. If I love you, I don't murder you. If I love you, I don't steal from you.

If I love you, I don't cheat on you. Love covers a multitude of sins. God is a genius, he's saying, "You don't need 613, you need my life, and the mark of my life in your life is that you're gonna believe me and trust me, and you're gonna love others even as I've loved you."

So those are new commands, and they're not burdensome. "If you love me, you will keep my commands." People read that as a threat, like, "Oh, if you love me you'd better keep my--."

RANDY: That's the way I read it.

ANDREW: That is not the grammar there. The grammar is this decisive, "This is what's gonna happen for people that love me."

You don't have to wake up and go, "Oh my goodness, I'd better keep the commands, I'd better, I'd better." No, if you love me you will, because I begin a good work in you and I carry you on to completion.

BLYNDA: So then the question, if I'm going backwards, is then tell those listening, me, then what does loving him look like? If I'm supposed to be getting rid of the idea of, I'm looking to the Scriptures as my to-do book, and now I'm looking at it to find how to fall more in love with him, what does it really look like? What does loving him look like?

ANDREW: Yeah, well, first of all, I don't believe that you need to fall in love with him more, I don't believe that. I believe that you love him because he first loved you, and I believe that he poured out his love in your heart. And I believe Ephesians 6:24, which says, "You have an undying love for Jesus," so I believe that about you.

I believe that you don't have to wake up and try to prove or measure your love for God. I think you're his kid, and I think you love him, and you can't stop loving him. Now, what is that gonna look like over a hundred years?

Love, peace, kindness, joy, self-control, the fruit of the Spirit. But here's the thing: show me one place in any New Testament letter where a Christian is pressured into, "You better love God more, you better prove your love for him, you better demonstrate--."

Uh-uh, that's not there, you can't find it, because the real gospel is about God demonstrating his love for us. We love because he first loved us, so what if we stop trying to love God more, and what if we let him love us?

RANDY: That's tough because I know I don't act like it all the time. So what do we do with that-- there's some dissonance there.

Like, I want to, it's like my favorite prayer in the Bible is, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Lord, I love you, but help my lack of love."

ANDREW: Yeah, so I think the difference, Randy, is that we're gonna take as our premise the finished work of Christ, instead of trying to go get more love for God. "God, please give me more love for you, please have it fall out of the sky and land inside of me somehow on a Tuesday." Instead of hoping, pleading, begging, waiting for more love to come my way, I'm gonna count on the finished work of Christ, which says I have everything I need for life and godliness.

I'm blessed with every spiritual blessing. He put his life in me, I'm sealed. So do I believe, on a Tuesday, that I'm complete in him?

If I believe that, I don't have to go get more love. I say, "You know what, I'm gonna count on what you said about me." It is reality, God sees reality.

I'm gonna tell you this: All three of us could walk out of here, and we're gonna prove this is true one way or another. We're gonna prove it by sinning and being miserable, or we're gonna prove it by bearing fruit and being fulfilled. Either way, you prove you're new and different.

BLYNDA: So where, in that, I think about like Malachi and the refining that it talks about there, and so I apply that to my life and think there are areas in my life that need refining, and how am I reconciling an area in my life that needs refining with everything that I have-- everything I need I already have?

ANDREW: Yeah, so I would say that's the difference between your heart, your spiritual heart, and your mind. Your mind is being renewed. I'm learning, you're growing, we're all maturing, there's a process.

But the process is not me getting more righteous in here. The process is not me inching closer to Jesus one inch at a time as I have another quiet time. The process is up here, Romans 12, the renewing of the mind.

It's called growing in grace, it's called maturity, it's called learning. I mean, you know, we see it in different ways in the New Testament, but never once do we see that a Christian needs another heart, a better heart, a better spirit, a better inner man, a better new self. What I'm saying is there's a difference between the hardware and the software updates.

RANDY: So this idea of more of Jesus, less of me, is that just a positioning of heart to head, do you think?

ANDREW: Well, I don't like it, I honestly don't like that whole framing. I've seen it on billboards in West Texas where I spent two decades. They literally have a billboard up there that says, "More of him, less of me," and then sometimes it's, "All of him, none of me," and I'm like, God already had that.

God already had that before Creation. He decided to create us, pursue us, save us, fill us, and include us, so I think it's very unhealthy to say, "All of him, none of me, more of him, less of me." That's not what God wants.

God wants all of you, all of him, together in a beautiful union. He's not trying to erase you or replace you, he wants to embrace you.

BLYNDA: Could it be though that what somebody's saying there is, now that I'm hearing you say it, and it's such a heart conversation we're having, but now we've included that the mind does play a role, and so thinking of ourselves less, meaning, in our minds, thinking of him more, choosing to set my mind on things above, could that possibly be where that came from or where that intention could be good, is I want to set my mind? My heart is solid, but now I want to set my mind on things above, and less on me.

ANDREW: Yes, I hear you, and I think that's way closer to the New Testament message, but I don't want to pit myself against God ever. Like, I'm his kid, and I'm a saint. And I can think about things above because I'm seated in heavenly places with him.

So yes, I think the best thing to resolve this entire discussion that we're having is to bring in the flesh and say, you know, that's our problem, fleshly attitudes, selfishness from the

past, programming from the world. I get saved and I don't get a brand new brain. I get saved and I don't have perfect thinking in my mind.

I get saved and there's still a process up here, so let's embrace that process, let's call it real. But here's the coolest thing, is that I can get the renewing of the mind without needing more here, because I have all of him in me.

BLYNDA: It's clicking!

RANDY: And this is not resolved yet, we're gonna continue this conversation. We're gonna pause it for a minute because I want you to consider this good work that we love doing here. And I want you to consider not doing it to prove you're a good Christian or a good person or that you care, but because you have Christ in your heart, you can't help but express his love.

And we like to do it in word and deed. Let me show you the deed, and then just check your heart, see what the Lord would have you do. Watch this.

ISAK PRETORIUS: All there is is the dry, burnt-out remnants of the last crops that were here. The dry soil that is testament to the fact that nothing can grow here.

ISAK: Veronica's brought her child here to this screening clinic here in the Quibala area of Angola today, and you can see, I don't have to describe the condition of this child. You can see that this child is suffering.

ISAK: But you know, the reality is it's not just a lack of crops. It's not just dry, parched soil. It's lives, lives that are being stolen by the lack of food.

Not a war, not some human-made crisis. Simply the fact that there isn't enough rainfall to grow crops to feed their children, and that is what's stealing their lives. This child is suffering from severe malnutrition, why?

Because there is no food at home. Literal starvation, children in these areas that have been starving to death, children dying of malnutrition, many parents telling us, "We don't know what to do, we don't know where to turn, we've done everything we can do, but we can't feed our children." For five years there has been a drought in this country that has meant that mothers like Veronica are not able to grow food for their children, are not able to provide what their children need, and you can see that this child Samuel is just a representation of more than 250 children that are here today, 250 mothers that have brought their child, saying, "Please help me.

Help me save my child's life." The solution is food.

The solution is expressing God's heart and extending his hands, and I'm asking you to do that today, please. Give that gift, give the gift of food, give the gift of life.

RANDY: When Isak talks about extending God's hands, we know from Scripture that we are his hands. That's you, that's me, that's us together. The only way we will reach 20 million meals this year, for a beautiful Christmas blessing, is with your help, and we need to hear from you today.

Let's give you an idea, it's around 11 cents to deliver a meal to a child. That means your gift of $44 today will help give 400 meals. A gift of $77 will give 700 meals.

Some of you can give 1000 meals, think about that, 1000 meals to someone in need with a gift of $110. And I know some of you, you wanna do more than that, you could give 10,000 meals for a gift of $1100, even more. Help us reach that 20 million meal goal this year.

You're going to bless somebody by picking up the phone or going online and making whatever gift God puts on your heart today. And I know as you see the numbers, it can be daunting, there's such a great need.

But I want you to see the opportunity here, the opportunity we have. And you know, Blynda, that's what blesses me is I go, you know, wow, we get to be God's hands and feet.

BLYNDA: It's so true, I hear that video and those cries of those children, they're so piercing in my ear, and I was there, I really got to experience the cries of that child. And you could leave there, you can leave watching that and go, "The need is so great, what could I do?"

Or you could listen to that cry and say, "What I do here, my generosity here, could actually bring life to that child." It is an opportunity, Randy.

RANDY: Yeah, and so don't ask, "What can I do?" Imagine what I can do, because you can do so much.

Join us, and join us right now. Again, go to the phone, go online, make the best gift you can.

ANNOUNCER: This holiday season, many families will gather around tables filled with food, but for mothers in impoverished communities, simply finding enough food to feed their children can be a daily struggle. Through Life's Christmas Meals Blessing, your generosity can help provide 20 million nutritious meals for hungry children. One meal, one child, and one precious life at a time.

Eleven cents, that's all it takes to provide a life-saving, nourishing meal. Your gift of $44 today can help provide 400 meals. $77 will provide 700 meals. And $110 will help provide 1000 meals for children in desperate need.

And with any gift, you may request James Robison's final book, "A Life Proclaiming Freedom", as a thank-you for your support. Discover the freedom James found in Jesus, and how you can experience it too. With your gift of $110 or more, request the "Fruitful and Flourishing" bundle, a beautiful collection of daily encouragement to remind you of God's faithful care and his promise of guidance from Isaiah chapter 58, verse 11.

Finally, with your gift of $1100 or more, you will help provide 10,000 meals for children in need, and can request Life's beautiful bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd". So please call, write, or make your gift online today.

BLYNDA: I had this moment where I thought, "Is there going to be enough food to feed all of the children?" They actually had a few more show up today than they had expected. And I really want to thank you, because it is your generous giving that does that.

But I also want to say, will you continue to give your best gift? There's other villages that need the same mission feeding program so that every child can have a hot meal.

So will you go to the phones right now, will you go online, and will you make the best gift you can? Thank you, and God bless you.

RANDY: You know, I want you to experience the joy of blessing others this Christmas, because it is a joy. So please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can, and today, if you would request Andrew Farley's book, "The Impossible Teachings of Jesus", we would love to send it to people because, I mean--.

BLYNDA: Because you need it, and you should get it, so.

RANDY: And you know what, a lot of times when I read these teachings, Andrew, I kind of feel like a failure, can we talk about that?

ANDREW: Yeah, let's do it.

BLYNDA: Thanks for joining us for another episode.

RANDY: Yep, we'll see you again next time here on "Life Today".

♪It's so quiet here ♪

♪And I feel so cold ♪

♪This house no longer ♪

♪Feels like home ♪♪

ANDREW: If we water down the law, then guess what? Our need for grace is watered down.

ANNOUNCER: "The Impossible Teachings of Jesus", tomorrow.

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