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Week 48

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Andrew Farley

“The Killer Sermon”

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by friends of Life Outreach International. Andrew Farley reveals why Jesus's impossible standard should actually comfort us.

ANDREW FARLEY: If we water down the law, then guess what? Our need for grace is watered down. And what I believe Jesus is doing is he's taking the law, he's not watering it down, he's actually ramping it up so that you'll see, "Whoa, no wonder I need grace instead. Now it makes sense: The law, way up there, is my tutor to lead me to Christ."

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RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today", I'm Randy Robison.

RANDY: Blynda Lane joins me.

BLYNDA LANE: Hi, Randy!

RANDY: How are you feeling today?

BLYNDA: I'm feeling good, I'm feeling really great because we had a show with Andrew Farley, it was awesome. If you didn't watch it, you can catch that on lifetoday.org. But we have him back today to finish.

RANDY: Well, we'll get as far as we can. So Andrew, welcome back. The book is "The Impossible Teachings of Jesus", I want you to see that.

And in there, Andrew, there's a quiz that you give, and people can get it online, they don't have to get the book, impossiblejesus.com, okay, so they can take this quiz. Let's start, let's see how far Blynda and I can get on this.

ANDREW: Sure, well, you got the quiz there, I mean, do you want to read some of them, that'd be awesome.

BLYNDA: "I'd cut off my hand to stop sinning," would you do that, Randy?

RANDY: I have obviously never done that.

BLYNDA: "I'd pluck out my eye to avoid temptation." I really like my eyes, I like--.

RANDY: Okay, how are we doing? Are we all for two?

BLYNDA: "I don't get angry, even silently," I've never been angry. Okay, I'm not doing so well on this quiz. "I let people hit me and invite them to take another swing."

RANDY: Not a chance.

ANDREW: Yeah, so you can see, I mean, we're four questions in and already we're failing, and that's the whole point. So, at impossiblejesus.com, people can take this quiz, and the whole point is to demonstrate, I mean, look at what Jesus is doing on the Sermon on the Mount. I mean, he's saying in this sermon, "I didn't come to abolish the law, I came to fulfill it, and by the way, not an ounce of it is gonna go away. It's in your face, you can't get rid of a jot or a tittle of it. So here's all you gotta do, everybody. Make sure that you're hiding your fasting. I want you to put lotion on so you look real good when you're fasting. Also, I want you to hide all your praying. Don't ever be seen publicly praying. Go get in the closet, don't let anybody see what you're doing, because that's arrogant. And then also hide your giving. Don't let anybody know about your generosity. And then be perfect like God, and by the way, here's a zinger, when you go to the altar to offer your animal sacrifice, I want you to get right with your Jewish brother first before you"-- okay, now, are we offering animals on altars?

No, so that clues me into something. His audience, his purpose, they're Jews living under the law, doing animal sacrifices. He's trying to show them you can't reach perfection.

And then what do we see today? Fast forward 2000 years later, we got Christians pulling Matthew 5 out of context, and we're beating each other up with it, and every one of us ends up feeling guilty, like a failure, "I'm not even close to the standard." So that right there is why I wrote "The Impossible Teachings of Jesus".

RANDY: Okay, but--so the law, in the Old Testament context, was the path to godliness, the path to righteousness, maybe, would you say, in the Old Testament?

ANDREW: I wouldn't, and I'm glad you brought this up. And I know, in your heart, you and I agree on this. I mean, this is like core gospel stuff, but oh, how brilliant it is to talk about it, because, you know, the law came in so that sin would increase.

That's Scripture, Scripture says that. "The law came in so sin would increase." So how was Joseph saved?

How was Abraham saved? How was anybody in the Old Testament saved? By faith, not by law.

RANDY: Reckoned to them as righteousness.

ANDREW: Exactly, so the law comes in not to rescue people. The law comes in as a mirror to say, "You look awful." And then you know what Jesus does in this sermon?

Jesus comes along with that mirror and he flashes a light right on it. I mean, now you're showcased in bright white light. Every imperfection, every issue is now staring you in the face.

So the Sermon on the Mount is Moses 2.0, it's the law on steroids. He's ratcheting it up through the roof. The bar they gotta jump over is in the stratosphere, and that's the whole point.

RANDY: So where do we go?

BLYNDA: Your book is in three parts, and in our first episode we kind of talked about the collapse and really highlighting what you're saying right here, but the next two parts are the flip and the freedom, and so that's where I get really curious. What does it mean about the flip and the freedom to understanding what he was meaning, the Sermon on the Mount, especially because it's in two parts, the Beatitudes and then all of these laws?

ANDREW: So something peculiar happens after the Beatitudes, and I want to stress that, because the Beatitudes are, "Blessed are these and blessed are those," and it's a beautiful description of the church, but then, then, in Matthew 5:17, he brings in a new topic, Moses, the law, none of it vanishing, all of it right in your face, staring at you. So the topic begins in Matthew 5:17, and from there he annihilates every lawkeeper that's ever lived. I mean, nobody survives this killer sermon.

And so then you say, all right, what do we do with that? Well, where is it? It's before the cross, before the resurrection.

It's being shown to the Jews of his day who are trying their best at lawkeeping. Who are we? Well, we live on this side of the cross.

We live under a New Testament, a new covenant era, an era of grace, we're born again. Pentecost has already happened. They waited for power from on high, now we've got that, his life in us.

So that's the flip, that's the game-changer. We are new covenant. We are different, we're not under the law.

So now you say, well then, the sermon has killed me, the cross has saved me, the resurrection has breathed life into me, now what? And I think God's answer to that is, walk by the Spirit and you won't fulfill the desires of the flesh.

RANDY: All right, can you handle the really hard question that's really gonna wreck our audience a little bit? So in that passage you're talking about, he says the law will not pass away until heaven and earth disappear. Are you suggesting that heaven and earth have disappeared?

ANDREW: No, in fact, I'm not suggesting the law has disappeared. So here's what Paul says: The law is our tutor to lead us to Christ. So that is exactly what I'm saying and what Jesus was saying.

He was saying, "The law is your perfect tutor, let me show you how. You're dead, you don't reach the standard, you fall short, look at you, whitewashed tombs, you got no hope, no chance. The law is your tutor to lead you to me." We started by faith in Christ, let's continue on by faith in Christ. He is enough, and so we're not--you know, the misnomer, the misunderstanding is that somehow we're saying the law goes away.

Quite to the contrary, I'm saying, "Look at the law, it is perfect, it is impossible, and it's not going away, so you need rescue." But if you're a child of God, you've been rescued.

RANDY: Ah, okay, so the law is sort of the condemnation side of it, and now for those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation.

ANDREW: Exactly, so if we water down-- watch this, if we water down the law, which is what's happening everywhere, "Oh, not 613 commands, let's just take 10, or let's just take 9, or let's add in 1 more and take 11," where we start fashioning this law to our own liking, we water down the law, then guess what? Our need for grace is watered down. What I'm doing, and what I believe Jesus is doing, is he's taking the law, he's not watering it down,

he's actually ramping it up so that you'll see, "Whoa, no wonder I need grace instead. Now it makes sense: The law, way up there, is my tutor to lead me to Christ."

BLYNDA: So every day, I should be waking up almost with this idea of the mirror shining at me, the reflection of, "This is how far I am distanced from perfection," so that I'm drawn to the need for Christ living out in me every day. I know he's in me every day, but living that out. It's like I need to have that reminder.

RANDY: Do you need that every day, or do you--?

ANDREW: I love this because you fell short of the glory of God, then you called upon Jesus to save you, and now the only mirror you need to be looking in is not the mirror of law and condemnation. How about you look into the mirror, like James says, look into the mirror, don't forget who you are when you walk away, let the Word speak to you. You're righteous, you're holy, you're blameless, you got a new heart, a new spirit, you're one with Jesus.

Now let's go walk with him today, have a great day. Now, if you were to go back to that old mirror, wake up every day and say, "I fall short. I won't--I'm not even willing to pluck out my eye. I'm not even willing to cut off my hand. I'm never gonna be perfect like God, and I'm just a horrible failure. Well, I'll try to be holy again today."

RANDY: So one of my least favorite sayings that you still hear in church, "All I'll ever be is a sinner saved by grace." Should we drop the "all I'll ever be is a sinner" and just focus on the "saved by grace"?

ANDREW: I think so, I mean, what if we called ourselves what God does? How about Romans? Saints, he calls us.

How about Galatians, "to the saints in Galatia," "to the saints in Ephesus"? how about Corinth where their behavior was disgusting, and he says "to the saints in Corinth," and he actually says, "to those who have been sanctified". That means set apart, reserved for God, he loves us, he cherishes us.

Stop behaving like a fool, but look at you. You're loved, you're cherished, you're bought with a price.

BLYNDA: Sometimes though when I hear these conversations, what it makes me think is, "Well, then Acts to Revelation is all I ever need to read then," because anything before Acts, before the beginning of the church, before resurrection, all of that is so tied to an old covenant, an old law, an old--and so really this Scripture, though I believe it's infallible and so good, really it's Acts to Revelation that's gonna give me the tools for life.

RANDY: Sorry, go ahead, I'll let you, you're the guest.

ANDREW: So here's the thing, I mean, first of all, we know the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. Also, the law of the Torah is 613 things, but by no means is that two-thirds of your Bible, meaning, like, you got how we got here, creation, how he spoke us into existence. We got rebellion, we got the pursuit of Israel, we got people saved by faith in the Old Testament.

I mean, the Old Testament can be cherished, of course, it's the Word of God. But don't forget the surprise ending. There's a surprise ending in the Bible, the cross, the resurrection, freedom from the law, and living under grace.

So it's just like your favorite detective novel or whatever, you don't want to stop 30 pages shy of the end and miss the surprise ending. But the whole thing is God's Word, and yet we say, "Wow, look where I'm located."

I'm not David saying, "Please don't take your Holy Spirit from me." I'm on the other side going, "Wow, you'll never leave me, you'll never forsake me."

RANDY: I actually, having what you call a cross-eyed view, right, I actually get way more out of the Old Testament than I ever did when I get the shift that did take place. Now it actually makes a lot more sense to me, and I see the the depth of it there that I didn't necessarily appreciate when I didn't have the view that you're talking about. But I do wanna ask you about one thing, because you know, the idea of works, and now we're talking about grace, right?

Works being the thing that justified you, now it's Christ that justifies you, it's all in grace. But yet you got the book of James, which was debated early on when they were canonizing Scripture, right?

I mean, that one was a hot topic, because it talks about works, and it says, you know, "Your faith without works," you know, the short version is, "is dead." Where do you see works tying in post-Christ, post-sacrifice, resurrection, Pentecost, all those things?

ANDREW: Well, it's not just James, I mean, Paul says, "We're recreated in Christ Jesus for good works." So I would just say that's fantastic, let's call it works, let's call it fruit. We can call it behavior, we can call it attitudes and actions, we can call it whatever we want, but don't forget the first half of that, "recreated in Christ Jesus" for that.

So that tells me about your design, and it tells me about your desire. You have new design and new desire, and therefore these things have been prepared in advance for you,

because look at you, you're the new creation. Now, about James, look, James gives us examples of what he meant, and his first example is Abraham.

Abraham did this "work", well, what did he do? He listened to God and he put Isaac on an altar. That's what James is saying, faith that responds by offering or opening.

So I would ask any Christian, when you heard the gospel, did you offer yourself to God? Did you open the door to him? He said he'd come in and be with you forever.

BLYNDA: I mean, the grace message, one thing I just love about having you on is you're forced to ask yourself the question, do I fully understand and live by grace? And I think if I'm honest, I know that I have a little bit of, just embedded in me maybe from our culture, embedded in me that it is grace plus a little bit of what I can do, you know? And of course, I know the finished work of Jesus on the cross has saved me, but this is just always a good-- this is a good, challenging message for me.

ANDREW: So what I would say, entering into everything you said there, is what if we add the finished work of the resurrection, the finished work of his life in you, the finished work of you and him together, in every moment, all day long? See, it's the cross, but that's half of it. It's the resurrection life that he promised that we have every single moment.

So then I go, do I need Moses? Do I need tablets of stone? Wait a minute, I've got resurrection life living in me, this is real?

Then all the questions begin to answer themselves. How do I live? What's the method?

Do I need rules? What's the approach? What should I do today?

Oh my gosh! I've got resurrection life inside of me, the life of Jesus every moment.

If that's real, then Jesus risen from the dead is the only reason I need for fruit, works, behavior. Like, suddenly I'm actually proving he's risen, and he lives in me.

RANDY: That sounds like a level of freedom that sadly, many in the church are missing. And what do you think happens when we live according to that freedom?

ANDREW: Well, I think it's scary at first. I think we're used to the guidelines, the guard rails, the rules, the measuring. Don't forget that was the first sin in the garden, you know, "Eat of this tree and then you'll be more like God."

"Eat of this tree and you'll know good from evil. Good, you could do more good, and avoid more evil, look at you, you're gonna be awesome, you'll be so much better if you just know

good from evil and start applying morality and ethics." That was the first sin. So what if we instead draw from the tree of life, you know, the other tree in the garden, the tree of life, not knowledge of good and evil, morality, ethic.

The world has that, the world tells you, "Be nice, be better, be a moral person, be a good person, try to love people, come on, you can do it, self improvement, self-actualis--." That was the first sin. And so what the resurrection does for us is, what if your life is a miracle?

What if your Christian life, what if the fruit bearing is actually supposed to be a miracle? Like, how did this even happen? If I have no rules and no guard rails, and I'm really accepted and loved no matter what, and I have freedom in Christ, how did this life end up being lived?

It must have been him in me. It must have been him in me all along. Is Moses--you know what, here's the laughable thing.

Is Moses really keeping Christians from sinning? Most believers can't recite the Ten Commandments, much less keep them. There's no way, in a moment of need, that we are reciting Ten Commandments on stone from long ago to guide us in that moment.

You know, believers, we're lucky to recite six or seven of them, but you know what? He'll never fail us, his life in us will never fail, and that is our true motivation.

RANDY: You got all that, Blynda?

BLYNDA: I wish you could see the wheels. I mean, it is so good, and it's truth that I know, but it's also framed in a way that I do find it challenging.

RANDY: Yeah, and I think a lot of it's how we apply that truth into our lives.

BLYNDA: That's it, yes, and it's the best news. It's the best news.

RANDY: Yeah, that's why they call it good news. All right, "The Impossible Teachings of Jesus". You may just need to get this and really digest this and read it two or three times as we're asking the same questions over and over.

We would love to send that to you today if you will join with us in something that we just love doing, and I think it's expressing the heart of Christ to meet the people who are in need, to see that need and not pass by, but to say, "You know what, I will give what I have," and it may not be enough, but that's the beauty of multiplication, that Jesus performs that

miracle. But we're gonna show you something here, and we're gonna invite you in today. Watch this, and you'll see how.

BLYNDA: The day before we went to the malnutrition clinic, we held a malnutrition screening in the village. Hundreds of children showed up, and this was my first encounter with severely malnourished children.

I had never seen children in such desperate need of nourishment. When we arrived at the Quibala malnutrition clinic, I thought I was prepared for what I would see, but I don't think anything can quite prepare you to look at a severely malnourished child who has no idea if they will live another day.

ISAK PRETORIUS: The clinics here are where we have children that we can't treat out in the community.

BLYNDA: When we arrived, we first went to an outdoor pavilion. Though there were some faint cries of children, what I will never forget was the silence of most of them. So many were too lethargic and sick to even utter a cry.

As we greeted the moms, I tried to look at each one in the eye, or at least give them a touch that let them know we loved them and we cared. I remember one mom specifically when I touched her, she was hot with fever.

BLYNDA: She's very, very warm, very warm. So what we're finding out is not only does this precious mama have her son here for malnutrition, she herself is very sick, and so she has to choose between taking care of herself or taking care of her little boy. And you can just see the emotion in her eyes, that her little baby boy is hurting.

And it's just so hard as a mom to watch a baby suffer, and she's doing everything she can for him. He's so precious.

BLYNDA: Once we left the pavilion, I had the chance to visit the rooms where the children sleep and stay. I felt a range of emotions as I walked through the room. I wanted to cry upon entering, as internally I'm processing the dire level of suffering these children were enduring.

But also, I wanted to be strong for the moms, believing they would sense the hope I felt for them and their children. My prayer was that they could sense from our hugs and prayers that they were loved and seen, not just by our team, but ultimately by God.

BLYNDA: You know, I watch that back, and it was just a few months ago that I was there, and the emotion is still there because the pain in the eyes of the children, the pain in the eyes of the mother was so real. And that one mom that I referenced, she ended up having malaria, we found out, and so the desire that she had to put her needs aside to help her child, this is how they live every single day. And we talked about, in that story, that being able to hug them and pray for them was important, but today what we're asking is could we do more than just pray for them?

Could we actually put action to our hope and our love for them? Every single child could be saved if we all together, and you do, you're so good at this, you're so good at hearing the need and reaching the need, but would you, in your generosity, would you do what you can to help us with these meals? These children, they don't just need a meal for a day, they need meals for a lifetime.

Randy, it's sobering to see it in a story form. I mean, I lived it, but to watch it like that and to remember the pain of those mothers.

RANDY: I'm really glad you got to go. It's one thing to see it on television, and that does convey the seriousness of the situation, but when you're there, and the smells, the touches, you realize that this is real, this is a serious situation, this is an urgent situation.

BLYNDA: Urgent, that is such a good word, Randy, it's urgent, it feels that way.

RANDY: But we can do something about it. We can do something about it, that's what I want you to hear today. We can do something, and by we, I mean you.

20 million meals, that's the goal. Listen, your gift right now of $44 will provide 400 meals. Your gift of $77 would provide 700 meals.

A gift of $110 would help provide 1000 meals. Every meal means another chance at life. Some of you could give 10,000 meals.

That's 10,000 times a child would be able to eat. That is life, that's what you give today. So please, go online, go to the phone, 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.

RANDY: These children are here because they're hungry. Now, thanks to your support in the Mission Feeding program, they're getting a meal today. They're getting that vitamin-enriched soup mix, and we will continue as long as you'll enable us to, because what we're seeing is where Mission Feeding is, hope lives.

There are many areas right now where Mission Feeding does not exist. We need to take it to them. We need to turn the malnutrition around for them, so that they will look like these children: healthy, vibrant, alive.

Look at these beautiful faces, another face of success of Mission Feeding, thanks to you. Let's keep going, let's reach another and another and another.

Go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. The lines are long, but we can meet the need.

RANDY: We would love to hear from you today. You can experience the joy of giving this Christmas as you give this Christmas blessing to others who desperately need it. So please, go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can, and I don't know, Blynda, do you think they might want this book?

BLYNDA: You're going to want it, actually, you might be thinking, "I don't know if I can handle it." You can, you're gonna want to, yes, get the book. And thank you for coming, thank you for kind of making me have to think differently about things.

RANDY: Yes, your website, for those who want to follow up with you, please?

ANDREW: Yeah, andrewfarley.org is the website, so it's just andrewfarley.org, and you'll find all our free resources there.

RANDY: Yeah, and there's tons of them, and they're really good, so please follow up there, yes, and then come back. We'll see you again here next time on "Life Today".

♪This house no longer ♪

♪Feels like home ♪

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