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Week 45: Rescue LIFE, last week

James and Betty Robison

Granger & Amber Smith

In the studio

JAMES: It could be that I'm the most excited I've ever been talking to somebody on television. You do realize I've been doing this for 50 years. And we've been doing it side by side now for pushing 40 years. I'm James Robison and this is my wife, Betty. We've been married 60 years.

I've got two guests today that just take my breath. And one of them is a country singer that said a few weeks ago, he's not calling himself a country singer. But he wrote a book. His name is Granger Smith, *Like a River*. Now he's going to tell us why he wrote the book.

So I want you to just take off. Why did you write this book? I mean you were a country singer, and now then all of the sudden you're just telling me that you're not going to be touring. Why did you write this book?

GRANGER: In Matthew 13 Jesus tells the parable about the hidden treasure. He said the kingdom of heaven is like treasure in a field the man found and covered up. And in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. That's the easiest way I could tell you. That I want to show people the treasure that I have found that is worth all of this. The story getting there is very complicated and long and involves severe suffering, which a lot of stories in the Bible do. But the end result is the treasure that the pearl of great value that I want to show everyone else.

JAMES: Do you see the magnificence of God in him right now?

AMBER: Of course, I do! It brings me to tears. I love witnessing him.

JAMES: Did it kind of shock you how drastic it seemed to be?

AMBER: Well, we went through the process together. Obviously, at different times of salvation but I think I knew it was coming. I think I knew that he would eventually leave his life of touring. I've always loved to see him on stage but to see him on this stage is one of the greatest things I've ever witnessed.

JAMES: Well, we have something in common you shared that's heavy. We have a daughter in heaven. Tell us about that weight. Tell our viewers.

GRANGER: Yes, that's the catalyst, that's the beginning. That's actually the first chapter of this book. We lost our little boy River; he was three years old. I was responsible for him. I was with all three of my kids. The namesake of the book. I was in the backyard, it was a beautiful Texas evening, about 7:30, June the 4th, 2019. Green grass under my bare feet, blue sky, white clouds. I thought, ooh! Soak in this moment because these kinds of moments won't last forever. Kids are young, and career's doing great. Amber was in the house getting ready for bed, to get everybody in bed. I was playing gymnastics with my daughter London. She liked to go through some kind of routine that she choreographed. And the boys were playing water gun fight, age three and five. Daughter was seven.

And I was holding my daughter's ankles as she was doing a handstand and I remember it was quiet. I thought it was quiet. What are the boys up to? Where is River? When I looked over my shoulder, and inside of our gated, locked pool there he was face down in the middle. And I couldn't understand what I was seeing. I couldn't compute. My brain couldn't comprehend that sight. But I ran and I crashed into the pool. I went for him and I grabbed his little body and I thought that I would flip him over and he would be crying

and coughing and gagging. And I would say, buddy! You can't do this! What are you doing? How did you get in here? You know you can't be playing around the pool. But that's not what happened. Instead, he was lifeless and cold and his skin was blue and his eyes were rolling around and his limbs were like a rag doll.

I took him to the shore, to the side of the pool and I started C.P.R., I didn't know how to do it; maybe like I'd seen in a movie, I tried. I told my daughter, "Go get your mama."

And Amber came out and I said, "I need my phone." So she u-turned, went back in, and got my phone. Called 911. We lived way out in the country. The dispatch was able to kind of walk us through on speakerphone C.P.R. with our little boy. And he would kind of, his body would kind of cough up water but it was just a reflex, it wasn't anything in him that was doing that.

It took them about ten minutes to arrive. And I was still in shock when they did, they were able to quickly regain his heartbeat with electric shock. So I felt there's hope, there is hope. The police were with me. Some of them were being stern with me saying, "This is a crime scene, you're staying with us. This is negligence."

And so, yeah, I, in complete shock there was one very gracious officer that came up and said, "They've recovered his heartbeat. You need to get your shoes on and get your family together in the car and go follow them to the hospital." So that's what we did.

They moved him to another hospital, more intensive and the nurses told us right away he was very, very sick. And it is going to be a long road to recovery. Well still I'm hearing recovery. I'm thinking, okay, he's going to be disabled or something but he is a fighter. River is a fighter and that boy could overcome so many obstacles. And it wasn't too many hours later when the doctor came in and said, "There is zero chance you'll ever see your boy again."

JAMES: Impossible! Lord, I don't know because we've experienced so much of what

they feel, in Jesus' name. Our daughter is in heaven. She has four grandchildren, she is watching from heaven. So we know the pain, but we all know the miracle you would hope for. You didn't get it. But did that somehow fit into this process of God taking you—the two of you realize there is a river that God wants to flow through all of us if we'd just become the channel shaped by his hands that can flow that river. Is that basically the process you see yourself going through now?

GRANGER: Sometimes the Lord has to take people to the very bottom of their river so that we can be only reliant on him. And I fought that. I tried to have my own paddles and oars. And I tried to build my own boat and control my own shoreline and control the flow of my river. But the river comes from a source and it's always flowing downstream. It is always going downstream. Now our responsibility is how much we want to surrender to that or fight against the current because it is going. And I fought. I fought hard for many months after this. I thought I could fix myself. I could wake up early. I could eat right. I could go to the right therapist. I could read the right devotionals. And I tried over and over to save myself and the Lord just kept taking me down until I was completely reliant on him.

JAMES: Well, you are now soaring. You don't see it yet but you are. The river is fed by tributaries but everywhere the river flows it is received with receptive soil. A desert becomes an oasis. And the river that God wants to flow through us as his family that you're going to inspire. His will can be done on his earth because the king has come and the kingdom is in us. And so his will can be done on his earth as it is in Heaven, and that's what you're going to help experience.

I've never seen a couple that I see more of him in than this couple right here. I'm going to tell you, he's not only going to flow *Like a River* through you but you're going to inspire us all to become a more yielded river and flow to receptive soil. God's made it very clear to me I can't sow seed because I only sow good seed in unreceptive soil. Only where it receives it. And I'm finding a world right now so thirsty for rivers and wanting good seed that brings good fruit.

So I'm going to just tell you we'll spend the rest of our lives seeking to join you and letting him flow *Like a River* through yielded soil. I'm just going to tell you that. Do you have anything you want to say?

BETTY: Well, first of all, that's a beautiful name. We have a great-grandson named River and he fought for his first breath too. But he's doing wonderful now. He's almost two years old.

JAMES: He fought a long time for his first breath.

BETTY: But we find through these different challenges of life, these tragedies at the moment that they happen that God is always with us, even when we don't even want to call upon him at times. He says, "I'll never leave you, I'm here for you." He is the greatest comfort, His Word and his truth, are the greatest comfort we ever found. Yes, we had friends and family and loved ones around us but they're at a loss for words because they hurt with you, and they hurt with us. But the greatest person in my life and his life was God, and almost in person because he was so real to us and still is. I've never felt so close to him as I do now.

Yes, we miss our daughter. Yes, we had 40 wonderful years with her, but a loss like that is devastating as you know. But Amber, tell me how are you doing and how did you take all of this on this journey that you didn't ask for?

AMBER: You know it, you've lived it. I think we make our plans but the Lord directs our steps. I've been saying, the Lord brought us through something that almost killed us but it brought us alive in him. He has given such good blessings through our pain and through our suffering and through our loss that we wouldn't have had if we still had River here with us.

And that's hard. You don't want to hear that sometimes. You just want your child. But

God has done some of the most transformative work in our lives, namely, our salvation. And if that's the only gift we ever got, that's the greatest gift that there is. And I know that I'll see him again. So we grieve with hope. And we plant seeds for others. And hopefully, those seeds will take root and bear fruit. And that's just what we'll do until God calls us home.

JAMES: You start praying for Granger and Amber. I'm going to send you the book. All you've got to do is ask for it. We're going to ask you to give some freedom and life to precious children that have been trafficked sexually. I'm so sorry that we allow the internet to stir men's passions to where they would lust after a little child; fly all the way across the ocean and have a kid to have sex with. There is so much you need to set us free with a river of your life.

Okay, so you wrote the book, and people can get the book. What do you want the book to do when they read it? What do you want to happen in their heart?

GRANGER: There is a message in that book. The message is this, through all my guilt and my shame of being in that backyard, being responsible for losing my son—when people say almost jokingly, as a parent your job is to keep them alive until they are 18. I failed at that but God and his love for his people invaded the earth, entered humanity himself in the flesh in the Son incarnate so that he could redeem his people, calling sinners, us, rebels that have failed—that have failed the law, lost ourselves in sin, rebelled against our perfect creator and his love for his people. He invaded the planet to redeem them to himself, dying on the cross taking the burden of all the sins and paying that debt in full saying, "It is finished!" For all who believe in him will be saved. That is the greatest story. It's in this book. If anyone gets anything, it's that story I want to be heard.

JAMES: And they will because you're putting it across. You had a turning point in your grief, somewhere. What was that? Like what was it?

GRANGER: People have different stories of when they're reading the word, the living

breathing Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, the Bible, reading it. That happened to me listening to a sermon in John 14. When the disciple asked Jesus, "Lord, why is it that you manifest yourself to us but not to the world?"

Jesus said to him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my Word. And my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him."

And I knew in that moment, I was redeemed, restored, and forgiven of my guilt and my shame for being the father, the mistakes I made, whatever they might be, I had a God, a creator, who created me in his image and loved me. And yet, my responsibility to show—not to earn anything, not to gain favor, but just to show, Lord, I love you. He said, "Keep my word."

So instantly I knew, I want to know His Word. I want to read it. I want to absorb it. I went home and I said, let's go straight to His Word. Let's bypass anything that might inhibit that and let's go straight to Matthew one. It seems like a good place, the birth of Christ. Let's start there and let's just read it. And let's read all the way through and let's not miss any word. And by the time I got to Revelations I thought, I better go to Genesis because Jesus said the prophets are talking about him. We better start and go all the way through that. And that fed me and nourished me, the living water, the living bread until I was not hungry for other things of this world. I just wanted that. And that was the treasure of Matthew 13 that I want to share with everyone.

JAMES: Just know this, he's never going to let you go, even if you miss the mark a mile. He's never going to leave your side. He is going to hold you. And here's what he wants you to help the church see, the only way he can put his arms around the world he gave his son to redeem is his body, the church. And we're trying to inspire that, and we've been doing it. We've been doing it for 60 years all over the world. And those viewers, they're never going to stop praying for you.

I may never point to people more important for you to pray for because they've been

gifted by God. Lord, just have your way. Thy will be done on your earth as it is in Heaven through this yielded couple, through this yielded clay in your shaping hands, creating them as vessels of honor to put you aflow *Like a River*.

You know there is too much, like Betty said, our little grandson River, all you'd have to do is look at him and say, you mean you fought to live after you were born? And you see the peace of God over him. We're supposed to be really close. Hey, I want to be really close to all of you. Every day when we come on *Life Today*, we're trying to not only get his arms around you and let you know they're there but you put his arms around somebody else.

We ask our viewers to help us feed starving kids, drill water wells, win people to Christ, and set people free from sexual trafficking. And think about it, America is the leading promoter and sales of pornography in the world—here in our country. And it is so distracting and damaging.

But would you set these precious little children free and these people that have been trafficked and give them a home? Would you reach them and rescue them and restore them? Would you please make the greatest gift you can make knowing it's going to be doubled? Okay? And we'll send you this book too. We've got a little—we'll send it to you because I want him to flow the river of his life through you. Would you let him do it right now for some of these children that need to be set free? Watch prayerfully and then put God's arms of love around them by supporting the mission outreaches. Watch!

On the mission field

>> The mere thought of innocent children being trapped in slavery, and robbed of their freedom and future was and still is beyond heartbreaking. Today millions of children around the world are still trapped in the horror of child trafficking.

They are voiceless, defenseless, and in desperate need of our help. I'll never forget the moment when I first learned about the devastating reality that changed my world—child

trafficking.

Open captions

>> Nearly 5 million women, girls, and boys are victims of sex trafficking.

>> Even after these children are found, the journey does not end there. These children need more than just rescue. They need love, support, and encouragement to heal from the trauma that they've endured. They need a safe haven, a place where they can rebuild their lives. I've seen firsthand the difference that a loving family can make in the lives of these children. Every step of this journey requires our unwavering commitment. It's a shared responsibility to rebuild what was stolen: Their childhood, their dreams, and their sense of self-worth.

Together, you and I can be a voice for the voiceless, a force for change, for justice, for healing. Together we can dismantle the chains of child trafficking and light a path toward freedom. We know it is a long road but we are making a difference one child at a time. Will you stand with us as we champion the rights and dignity of every child?

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Betty, that accent was New Zealand. She's come to the sex capital of the world. And you saw the beautiful building, I just wanted you to see that, Destiny House. Your love built that. And that's a Hollywood couple that provided power for all of the motion pictures where there was no power. She had a seven-carat ring, I've told you this story before, she sold it and then went and rented facilities. And we found them and they said our ministry had inspired them to even make the move they made. And we moved them from renting houses to building the most beautiful place. It's just a magnificent thing what she's doing. But they're able to do it. They're able to reach, rescue, and restore, Betty. Literally, train these girls after they set them free. Reach them, rescue them, and restore them, give them a future. That's what your love is doing.

And right now, I want to remind you that we've got an incredible gift that will double what you give. \$128 is the average to rescue one but now it will rescue two. You make a gift of \$1280, you don't just rescue ten, you rescue 20. Everything is doubled!

So please, Father, help everyone watching to want to reach someone. We reach so many of them before they're kidnapped. We reach them when they're left somewhere and they're so vulnerable or when they're promised a false hope and taken captive. God, thank you for that. Thank you to the viewers who make it happen, in Jesus' name.

It is the viewer. It is the people that watch *Life Today*, that share *Life Today*. Would you go right now and get your bank card? Would you use it like a check? Would you go online or dial that number there, that prayer line that's paid for by love? And would you make the best gift you can knowing that you're giving freedom? You're given an opportunity to experience life miraculously. I'm praying everyone watching will help.

BETTY: I do too. I know your hearts had to be touched as ours is always because we know the opportunity there. We know the heartbreak of kids needing that hope as little children that life is going to get better for them. Please continue to join with us if you've helped us before. But if it is your first time, count it a great joy to be able to partner with us, and let's make a difference for these children.

JAMES: Thank you so much. You know we're going to send you some gifts to bless you because we want to always bless you as we have during this program. But you're going to become somebody's miracle and we thank you for it.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: *Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry of human trafficking.*

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved, and restore young lives and give them a future. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to help reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift today, we'll send you "Declare." This beautifully designed 31-day devotional reveals 31 names of God from scripture and gives insight into the character, grace, and the depth of God's love for you.

With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive The Gospels book set. This special edition collection of the four gospels in the classic King James version includes journaling space opposite each page of scripture so you can reflect as you read. The perfect companion for your daily time with God.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Consider the Birds."

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

On the mission field

RANDY: A human trafficker came through here many months ago and promised this young lady's sister a better life, lured her away, and they haven't heard from her. She is as far as they know gone. They have her picture and they have the prayer that she'll come back, the hope that they will see her again.

This is the reality here and in places all over the world. That's why Rescue LIFE is critical. We must first reach into places like this with education so that they'll know what to look out for when these predators come through. We must rescue the girls that we can and get them out of the sex trade. And we must restore them. We must give them a hope and a future.

We can do that. We can do it on a larger scale but we have to have your help. I pray that you will help us as we try to help so many girls. We have to stop this abuse. It is not right. You can do something. Join us as we Rescue LIFE.

In the studio

JAMES: I've really been blessed. Thank you for helping us. Please do all you can to get God's arms around these people. I want you to pray for Granger and Amber. I want you to read this book. I'm going to send it to you. Thank y'all for being here. We're going to stay really close to you. He's never going to let loose but we won't either because you're very, very special in our hearts, just right now.

You are too. Yes, you are! That's why we're here. We're here for you every day because He loves us. Thank you for helping us love other people and share his love.