

1/26/24

Week four: WFL

Randy Robison

Mission special #1

In the studio

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*—a very special and urgent *Life Today*. I hope you will stick with me for the next few minutes because we have spent the last several days in what most consider the poorest nation on the face of the earth. And we have gone into the most impoverished areas of this nation. It's Burundi; it is in East Africa. And we have seen situations that frankly, most of us haven't seen before.

A lack of clean drinking water is causing sickness and death and it hits those under the age of five especially hard. At *LIFE Outreach International*, we have a program called Mission: Water for LIFE that is designed to address it. And through the help of many people just like you, we have been able to change some situations. But right now, the need could not be greater. And it is not just here in Burundi, it is in many nations where clean drinking water is not readily available. In fact, in some places, it is nowhere to be found.

We have a solution but we need your help. So please, take a few minutes as we walk you through the harsh realities of what's going on in our world and look for a way to be God's blessing, his hands and his feet, to those in desperate need. Watch this.

Begin video

ANNOUNCER: Water: Earth's most abundant natural resource! Yet out of this abundance only a tiny fraction of it is suitable for drinking. And suitable is a loose definition.

JAMES: You know if you were thirsty in Africa or in many remote parts of the world, you would walk up to a stream like this and say, oh, I've got great water! But what you don't realize is, in this area alone, thousands of people got cholera, serious severe diarrhea. Many people, it cost them their children.

ANNOUNCER: Our mission teams have seen these water conditions firsthand in several countries around the world, and they have ministered to families whose lives are torn apart by contaminated water.

TAMMY: I've sat with mothers who have just buried their children. I've cried with them. I've wept with them. Asked them what they needed. The only thing they would ever tell me was water. Just if we had clean water, I know my children would still be alive.

JOHN: So I'm here in Boma, South Sudan with Lakukum. She is a mother from a local little village that is right up the hill here. She brought me down to her water source. I wouldn't let my dogs drink from this water. This is the story all over the world. Statistics show that one child will die every 20 seconds from a waterborne disease – and it doesn't have to be that way.

RANDY: Amiable, you see these kids down here getting this water; but this is not clean water, is it?

AMIABLE: It's not. It's very contaminated water. It has worms, frogs, all the animals come here and drink from this water, so it is not really safe to drink.

RANDY: I can't help but notice that they're working so hard to get water that actually could kill them.

AMIABLE: Yeah, but they have no other choice.

RANDY: They don't have the choice right now. It's just the death in the water. But we can give them the choice.

ANNOUNCER: While the problem here is serious, the solution is surprisingly simple – a clean water well. LIFE Outreach and its mission partners have the experienced teams and necessary equipment ready to drill hundreds of safe life-giving water wells around the world.

TAMMY: Clean water is here in this village and it's literally giving them water for life! Thank you so much everybody for all that you've given, all that you've sacrificed. It has changed so many lives of children all around the world just like here today.

[Cheering]

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: One of the things we want to do when we face this global crisis is infuse the gospel into the outreach because the two are inseparable. And so I'm excited to have Pastor Amiable with me who helps us here; really runs all the outreach, coordinating with the people that put the wells in the ground here in Burundi. And he is our frontline guy. You see it all.

What have you seen when you go out into these impoverished areas where people don't have clean drinking water?

AMIABLE: Thank you so much, Randy. As a citizen of Burundi, I do not wish my people to suffer. But when you go out there you see people trying to get clean water in vain. Some will walk long distances to go to look for or to find safe drinking water but they can't. They end up drinking polluted contaminated water. People get sick and some die.

But at least God is sending people into Burundi like you to help us provide clean water in some areas, and that is helping a lot.

RANDY: Let me ask you that. So you've seen villages that didn't have a well, they didn't have good clean water. What is the difference before they have a well and after they've had a well that you've seen?

AMIABLE: The impact is very remarkable. Before they had clean or safe drinking water you could see—you could tell people were not healthy. I think of children vomiting, have bad tummy—

RANDY: Yeah, the tummies, the diarrhea, all that.

AMIABLE: Yes, exactly. And now that they have clean water you can see them healthy—you can tell they're healthy. They have appetites. They go to school.

RANDY: They seem to have more energy in the one place we went.

AMIABLE: Exactly! The impact is huge when they have safe drinking water because you can—and they don't complain as they used to. The mothers will say, look, our children are getting sick because of dirty water that they drink. But now when they have clean water, they praise God.

RANDY: And praise God. So that is an important thing because you're a pastor. The water outreach, of course, from *LIFE Outreach International*, we believe that it is a demonstration of the gospel but we also believe in preaching the gospel. What happens when you go into these villages? Are you able to tell them about Jesus? Do you preach to them? Do they come to your church? Most of the distance wouldn't allow for that but is there any kind of discipleship and evangelism that is going on?

AMIABLE: Well, the fact that we are going into these communities connects us with people. The number one thing that comes to our mind when we go to—when instructing people is how can we bring in the gospel? Which is the most important thing that we need. We wanted them to receive something that will give them life—life in abundance. But the greatest need will be Jesus and eternity. So we preach, we share the gospel with them. Whenever they're around the well, we

tell them look, you can drink this and be healthy, but you can drink this and end up in hell. But there is another water of life that you can drink that will give you eternal life. That's why we're bringing the gospel. Whenever we share the gospel there are people who accept, we pray over them, and then sometimes we will send teams to disciple them just to help them walk with the Lord.

RANDY: I love it. Thank you! Thank you for being here. And thank you for partnering with us. It just means the world. It's been a real pleasure being with you this week. It is an honor to know you. You are a brother in Christ.

AMIABLE: It was a pleasure to work with you. Thank you so much for walking alongside us as we save our people in Burundi.

RANDY: And it's only made possible by our viewers like you. You heard him talk about what Jesus said to the woman at the well, if they drink this water, they will be thirsty again. But the water that Christ gives will last for eternity. Up from their inner beings will spring fountains of living water. So it's a whole thing, a whole project. We view it as hand in hand, in word and deed.

Now, while some good things are going on here, the impact on the individual is very real. The pain that a mother feels is very real. The siblings, the community, when they lose so many like we've seen just this week. A mother's love across the world is largely the same—a mother loves her child, a father loves his children. And children are suffering.

I want you to take a moment to watch one mother's story and when we get back, we're going to get into the details of how you can make a difference in the lives of these mothers and their children. Watch this.

On the mission field

[Rooster crowing]

Announcer: Life -- carefree, nurturing, loving, secure. Universal needs for children and parents alike, yet in many places of the world such qualities are threatened every day by a simple and basic need -- water!

Open Captions

>> During the dry season, water is very hard to find. But our water source, year-round, is dirty and diseased. Sometimes our whole family gets sick. As a mother, it is so painful to be unable to provide for your kids. When my daughter was three years old, I gave her the water. It caused her to start vomiting. She became very, very sick. She had diarrhea and her stomach was bloated. I didn't know what to do.

Announcer: At that point, nothing could be done. Her daughter fell unconscious and never again awoke. Nown knew the cause.

Open Captions

>> No words can express the regret I feel for giving her that water... But what choice did I have? Now, I'm so afraid the water will also take my son. If I lose my son, I will have nothing to live for.

Announcer: The lifesaving solution of clean water is so incredibly simple. However, it is one we can only deliver with your help today.

End of clip

In the studio

RANDY: I can't imagine that pain as a father of four children. I can't imagine losing a child. To lose a child to something that can be easily addressed is not just a tragedy, it is a real shame. There are a lot of reasons we could go into but the bottom line is we have a situation where we see a need, we see thirsty people, we see mothers grieving lost children, we see mothers concerned about their other children.

There is something we can do. It is within our power to do something very good, and we don't want to withhold that blessing from these people. Here's how it works. We go into these communities with your support and we drill a water well that goes down and gets fresh, clean drinking water. It is tested. We maintain these wells. And it provides what we call Water for LIFE.

The average cost of a well is \$4800. And there is a lot of variation but when we look at our overall budget for the wells that we're doing in an individual year, the average is about \$4800. What that means is your gift of \$48 today will provide clean drinking water for ten people. And I've got to tell you, if you're a mother and her other children are one of those ten, it makes a world of difference.

And you know what? We've talked to medical experts, the ones that have been in situations where we've drilled these wells, and they say it doesn't take long at all. You put clean drinking water into your body your body celebrates, it absorbs it immediately and the changes can be drastic in a very, very short period of time.

So a \$48 gift today will help provide clean drinking water for ten people. Now many of you can go beyond that. A gift of \$144 will help provide clean drinking water for 30 people. A gift of \$1200, if you're able to do that, can be combined with three other gifts and it will provide clean drinking water for about 250 people. And a gift of \$4800 will provide an entire well. Some of you can do that. Some of you can do two wells.

You have no idea the impact you will have on people. You will save lives. You will restore health. You will open up opportunities for the gospel. Whatever gift you can give today is significant—it is huge, I believe in the eyes of God. And I know it is huge in the impact on those who are dying of contaminated water.

I pray that you will go to the phone or go online right now. Make the best gift you can. Do it with the Holy Spirit leading, but do something. We need to act quickly. Children are dying every day.

We can stop it. Go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can, and let's give them Water for LIFE.

Begin Video

***ANNOUNCER:** Every day, thousands of lives are lost to waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through mission Water for LIFE, you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it's too late.*

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will provide for ten. \$72 will provide for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you Daughter, written by James and Betty's granddaughter, Laney Rene. This insightful book invites all girls and women to walk in the freedom of their God-given identity and embrace who they really are.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "Great is the Lord" decorative blanket featuring the words of Psalm 145:3. This beautiful blanket is perfect for comfort and cold weather and a reminder of your help with Water for LIFE.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people. Or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And request our new bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water," inspired by Jesus' words in Mark 9:41.

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

On the mission field

RANDY: In so many places around the world, we see people that don't have water—any water to drink. If they do, they're scraping it from the worst places possible. But in some places, like where I'm at right now in Burundi, there seems to be an abundance of water. But the water is not safe.

Open captions

>> My baby's name was Stella. She died earlier this year. Her whole body was swollen and when I got her to the hospital she died. She was vomiting and had diarrhea. Adults suffer from this but the kids suffer so much more than us.

RANDY: It was this water source where she would come and get the water every day in these jugs and take it back to her children. And it is this water source that took Stella's life.

Open captions

>> It is very difficult to think about her. It is very painful for me. I wonder why I am still here. I wish I could die and join her.

RANDY: I don't want Jacqueline to go through this again. She has other children. She's doing all that she can. Are we doing all that we can? We can change this. We have the power. It is within our power to give them clean drinking water so that she doesn't get to the point where she wants to die.

That's why it is critical that we do something right now. You and I can do something. We can come in and we can put in a well in this village and they will have clean water. There are so many other villages just like this. So many other mothers that are experiencing the same pain that Jacqueline is feeling.

We want you to join us in reaching around the world to places like this and giving them clean, pure, drinking water. Will you do that? Will you give life? Will you give Water for LIFE? When you do, you will be changing the lives of mothers like Jacqueline all over the world. Do it today.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: When I see situations like that, I can't help but look into scripture and see a pattern, I think with Christ. He was thirsty—he was thirsty. Jesus Christ was thirsty and went to the well and asked a woman to give him a drink. And that's where he talked about the eternal water that he gives to us. As he was preaching and people got hungry, he fed them. He even said, "I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was hungry and you gave me something to eat."

There's this pairing of meeting practical needs and sharing the gospel. We call it demonstrating the gospel, the love of Jesus, in both word and deed. And I really don't think you can separate them. That's why it is critical to me and all of us, as my parents have done for years, to say we're going to show someone the love of Christ by meeting that practical need. That's why we give them clean drinking water. It does replenish their physical health. But we also give them the living water of Jesus Christ which will give them eternal life.

It is interesting when Paul, after receiving the gospel himself directly, went to validate it with the apostles, James and John, to be specific. He went to Cephas. And the apostles who had walked with Jesus bore witness to what Paul had received. And then, there is this interesting little statement. And Paul says, "I was reminded by the apostles and I agree with them, we don't forget the poor." The ministry of Christ was all about reaching the poor, "The least of these" he called them; what society would consider the lowest, the most underprivileged, if you will. Those who are thirsty. Those who are suffering.

Why do we do what we do? Why do we ask you to join us right now? Why do we believe it's urgent? Number one, it is out of obedience to scripture. It is following Christ's example, and we're privileged to be able to do that. And number two, it opens the door to having a relationship with people who are in desperate need by providing for their physical needs and tending to their spiritual needs. This is the complete Water for LIFE mission. It is a mission to give life to those who are facing death, both temporarily and eternally.

We want you to be a part of it. In fact, we can't do anything without you. My dad likes to say, "We can only give what you put in our hands," and that is exactly right. We've done this thousands of times. We've drilled thousands of wells in places so we know the impact that it has. But right now there are so many factors that have led to people being in situations like you've seen today.

We need to do something. I feel like it is a matter of both urgency and obedience and compassion, yes, to reach out today, for you to join us, to join those who are on the ground in many countries where they don't have clean drinking water and say, you know what? I want to do my part. If all of us will do something, whatever God leads us to do, I can tell you the impact will be huge. It will be real. It will meet the temporary need, and the immediate risk will go away, but we will also be reaching into eternity.

I don't think we really understand fully how big this is. But it starts by you going online, going to the phone, and making the best gift you can. Remember \$48 will give water to ten people. A gift of \$144 will provide clean drinking water for 30 people. A gift of \$1200 can be combined with three others to provide an entire well. That well is \$4800. And you know what? You may be the one that can provide an entire well—maybe two or three, whatever God enables you to give.

God bless you for doing it because you will be blessing others. So go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can, and join us in this beautiful Mission: Water for LIFE.

Begin Video

ANNOUNCER: Every day, thousands of lives are lost to waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through mission Water for LIFE, you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it's too late.

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End of video

In the studio

RANDY: The situation is urgent. We need to let our mission partners know how much we can help them. So please, go to the phone, go online, and make the best gift you can. And if you plan to write a check or make a gift at a later date, would you just call us and let us know so we can prepare to bless as many people as possible? And thank you for the blessing. Whatever you can do, you will be giving life. So I hope you will do what God puts on your heart. God bless you! And thank you for being such a blessing to others. We'll see you again next time.