

**5/21/24 from 12/07/23**

**Week 21: Spring Mission Feeding**

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Andrea Herzer**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison and Tammy is with me.

**TAMMY:** Hey Randy.

**RANDY:** There are times, Tammy, where you encounter someone and it's God in them but they minister to you in such a way that it goes deep. And that happened in a Zoom conversation with our guest, Andrea Herzer. Welcome!

**ANDREA:** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

**RANDY:** I'm glad you're here. It's been a little difficult getting you here. How are you doing today?

**ANDREA:** Honestly, today is a little bit of a tough day. As many people with chronic pain and health issues can attest, there are nights when we have insomnia and we can't sleep and the pain just won't quit. But I know that in my weakness he is strong and I'm here in his strength today. So I'm grateful to be here.

**RANDY:** We're glad to have you here. Your book is called *Incurable Faith*. It is available now. We'll tell people how to get it. But you have gone through a lot of pain. You're still going through pain. But your faith you say is strong.

**ANDREA:** That's right.

**RANDY:** How does that even work? Because that's a hard part for a lot of people who are suffering from chronic pain.

**ANDREA:** Yes, it's true. And it needs to be something that is very intentional. I had walked with the Lord for about a decade before I was stricken by my health issues. I had already put in place the rhythms of a spiritual life, which was reading my Bible every day; as you can tell it is falling apart. But reading my Bible daily, and prayer, and meeting with other believers, and fellowship. So those rhythms that even when I didn't feel like it, I continued to press into the Lord. And on the days I was fully bedridden I would just lie there and begin to praise him in my pain. And it would take my mind off of the depth of just the sharpness and the burning that happens with the type of pain that I have. It would lift my mind into his presence and fill me with Holy Spirit-led joy. Because joy is a gift of the spirit. It is not something we have to manufacture. So those are the things that help keep me strong amid this journey.

**RANDY:** And a little *Life Today* on television?

**ANDREA:** Yes! Absolutely! Can I tell you that story? So I've had health issues for over 20 years now, serious debilitating health issues, and there was a very long season where I was completely bedridden. I could leave my bed if I used a walker or a scooter because of the depth of my neurological disease, and the depth of the pain involved in walking.

So I would just lie there feeling lonely, wanting comfort, wanting fellowship. And the fellowship that came into my home every day was through this show, *Life Today*. And at the time, it was your dad and your mom, James and Betty. They just would minister to my heart. And so what a beautiful redemptive God we have that he would bring me here today to minister to others who might feel alone or afraid or weary of their health issues.

**RANDY:** Yeah. I have to say it is because of viewers just like you who put *Life Today* on

the air that we were able to minister to Andrea and she's here today to minister to you. So for all of you who support *Life Today*, thank you.

But Andrea, would you tell us what you're facing? What are these neurological issues and other things that have come along?

**ANDREA:** Well, my health journey started shortly after the birth of our third child. It began with feeling like I had the flu that never went away. My joints felt like they were being stabbed. I had burning through my whole body. It was hard to even lift my arms. It felt like there was a weight of gravity that was just heavier on me. I had difficulty feeding my child. I had to brace one arm with the other. So understandably, I pursued healing. I received a diagnosis of fibromyalgia, interstitial cystitis, and a few other related issues. I just did everything I could. And a year after I started writing I had an accident to my left hand, my writing hand, and received a diagnosis of complex regional pain syndrome, which is a neurological disease, and it is debilitatingly painful. So it spread to both limbs, spread to my feet, my ankles, my knees. And I was on a scooter, and a walker; could not take a step out of bed without that walker.

And then, I was diagnosed with two types of advanced-stage cancer and one was aggressive. But I can say that with a smile on my face because by that time I knew the Lord's faithfulness. I knew his strength amid suffering. And I knew that if he allowed that for me, he was going to bring redemption into it. It was going to be a ministry of life and peace to others because Jesus was in the midst of it. And I also found that cancer was just the specific address where Jesus wanted to meet me. And he did. And he continues to meet me because I continue to struggle with cancer. I just battled it again this past year.

Nine weeks ago, I was in the hospital with COVID pneumonia and a dangerous blood infection. And then I ended up having to have a bronchoscopy and then they found heart issues. So it's a journey—

**TAMMY:** Andrea! Wow! Wow!

**ANDREA:** Yeah, I know, my husband and I, humor is a big thing in our home. We almost have to laugh about it. But when I was first told, "Oh, yes, I know you're having lung issues and you're having sinus issues, and you haven't kicked COVID, but now you have to go to a cardiologist." I just sat in silence before the Lord. I just felt like okay, this is too much. I don't know how I'm going to do this.

The very next day I woke up and what was just resounding in my mind was my body was bought at a price. I am not my own. My body belongs to you, Lord, and if you want to allow something so that you're going to use me in a way and in an area that I wouldn't go to otherwise, who am I to deny my Lord any part of my body? Because he didn't withhold his whole being for us.

**TAMMY:** When do you say it is enough? God, I can't take one more thing! And finding strength in him through all of this. Like, I'm amazed when you tell me—I don't know how I would do. I think you'd have to set your mind on the eternal all the time. Like I'm in so much pain, this hurts, I can't move. Everybody is experiencing life to the fullest and I'm sitting here. And I'm not happy about it, God. I think we can be honest with that. There is nothing that's making me happy but I can still find joy, which is a very different thing than happiness. But there are so many people who are probably watching today that just feel like I have shouted it's enough. I can't take one more thing. What would you say? What encouragement would you give them to find strength in the midst of this moment? Because I'm sure it is moment by moment by moment.

**ANDREA:** Because God's grace is moment by moment. You mentioned something and I think I want to back up to this. You said, "Everyone else is experiencing life to the fullest." And the truth is, they might be busy, they might be doing activities, but me lying bedridden, in bed praising Jesus, that is life to the fullest. The abundant life doesn't consist of the activities that we do or the places we go or the people we know and we know that.

**TAMMY:** That's so good, Andrea, so good because we—

**ANDREA:** I had to learn that the hard way. I didn't know that 20 years ago.

**TAMMY:** That's right! You had to learn it. So there might be somebody else on the other side too that says, okay, I get what she just said. And maybe I need to change my thinking on this.

**ANDREA:** Yes, because here's the thing. Jesus promises an abundant life to all of his followers. He doesn't say you're going to receive an abundant life if you're healthy or if life is going well. The truth is that his abundance is everlasting. It never runs out.

And so I did have to struggle through how I define abundance. And the abundant life actually equips us to live victoriously amid all of our challenges. That's right! That's right!

**RANDY:** Interestingly, there is this thought in the church today that if I follow Jesus, I'm going to have an easy life. If I get sick healing is guaranteed in this life. What do you think about those ideas? Did you ever have any of those ideas?

**ANDREA:** I absolutely had some of those ideas. And basically, people were telling that to me. If you had enough faith you'd be healed. God doesn't want you to be sick or disabled. And I would think, well, I've confessed every sin that I could possibly think of over and over for years and it keeps getting worse. More things keep happening because our bodies are complex and they're wonderfully made. So when one part starts breaking down it impacts other areas.

So in my journey, and I do talk about this in my book but what I came to discover is that people might want to focus on God's power with miraculous healing. And I just heard a sermon like that this weekend. The Lord does miraculously heal in some cases, and we know that. And I've had some of those things happen in my own life. And so I think we

can unnecessarily discourage those with health issues when we tell them this is the box that God is going to fit you in.

**RANDY:** Yeah. I think we do a disservice. Even the paralytic who was let down through the roof because he needed physical healing, Jesus first said, "Your sins are forgiven." And then he healed his body. So he can do that. But to me, the priority here, the order of things is eternal. Everybody that Jesus healed died eventually. Even Lazarus that he rose from the grave, he died again. Right? But the eternal things are really what he's after.

And so man, if I'm sick, I'm going to the doctor, and I'm praying for healing. I would never condemn anyone for doing that. I'm going to do everything I can. But I think what I hear you saying is that the faith needs to be incurable. In other words, the faith outlasts all the flesh stuff.

**ANDREA:** Because I think our health issues do tempt us to focus on the temporal. We begin that almost like healing and the health of our bodies becomes a God, truly. And these bodies are not going to last forever. And praise God for that. I don't want this body to last forever. I have the hope of salvation through Christ. And Jesus is my hope.

I ask people where's your hope? What are you anchoring your soul to? Is it through temporary healing that may or may not last? Or is it going to be in Jesus Christ the fulfillment of all of our faith?

**TAMMY:** That same thought is are we constantly focused on our healing rather than the healer? So when you change that, again it goes back to the eternal. I think if I'm constantly just thinking about this, this, this, I think it feels more hopeless. So if you can somehow switch that even a little bit each day into the hope and into the healer, I think, even in the worst of situations, I don't know what it feels like to be housebound or bedridden. When I think about your life, Andrea, it just kind of—it knocks me out a little bit because I don't know the weight that you carry every single day. Sitting in this chair, I know it's hard for you. I know the way you walked in, the way you have to sit, the shoes

you have to wear, everything. I know you're in pain right now.

So your gift to us right now as just being here is enormous, and to people watching is enormous. Many times when we're writing a book it might take three months, six months, it depends, but *Incurable Faith*, you spent many years writing this.

**ANDREA:** Sixteen years.

**TAMMY:** Sixteen years journaling, journaling for the person that may be sitting in bed, sitting at home that feels like I'm just—I don't know what to do anymore. I don't know what to say. I don't know what to pray. My healing on this side of heaven may never come. But how can I steward this pain well? And I think this book will help people navigate through that, your gift.

And one that resonated so much with me is a devotion called "Breakthrough Pain." I just want to read a little bit if I can because I think people might relate to this as much as I did.

"Every part of me is affected when I'm in a pain flare. Gravity presses on my burning muscles until they become heavy under the weight. I feel nothing but the burning and stinging and crushing that is my pain. My thoughts become scattered and lost in the fog that pain creates. Pain builds a wall that blocks my vision so I lose my sight of hope. I may be cut off from the vigor of health but I'm never cut off from the Lord. Nothing—not trouble or hardship or affliction or pain or illness can separate me from the love of Christ. His love helps me rise and more than conquer the tyranny of pain. It will not reign over me. The Lord helps me rise. Even on the days when I cannot get out of this bed, I rise up in faith through prayer. I rise into thanksgiving by singing praise songs. I rise up out of despair by listening to gospel music. My prayer, my praise, and the singing voices of other believers converge to lift my spirit up, up, up, out of my pain, and into God's presence. His presence is peace. His presence is joy. His presence is comfort.

Pain --"

[ Emotional ] I'm sorry.

"Pain with all its trickery and wiles cannot enter the sacred space in your life. The wall that pain built is shattered. My spirit is restored."

Gosh! To me, that's a declaration that even though things are falling apart around you, your spirit is strong and it is being restored every single day. You speak life, moment by moment. You speak life through every word. There is nothing wasted in this book.

For anybody that is on the other side right now watching that says I get that. That is me. I want you to know that God sees you, he is for you, and he is capable of restoring every ounce, every fiber of your life right now even through the pain. He's not surprised, he is in the details. So you don't have to be isolated, you don't have to be alone, the Holy Spirit is filling that room right now and covering you and breathing life into your direction. We love you. There are people here right now that will pray with you. There is a number on your screen. If you need prayer, if you feel without words right now but you need somebody to stand in the gap and pray with you, then call us right now. We would be honored to pray with you through this moment in your life to help you get to another moment. So go to the phone and give us a call so we can stand with you and agree with you.

**RANDY:** How did your own words hit you just now?

**ANDREA:** Well, two things were happening. I was praying for the people who were hearing that, and either know what it is like to feel the pain but don't yet know what it is like to feel the comfort and the peace and the presence of God in their pain. And I was praying for the ones who need that food, need to know that it is possible. And then, I was also remembering where that poured out from, and that time when I started discovering the truth of worshipping God well bedridden, and well in pain. And I did the best job I



could to put it into words but it is a spiritual experience that just defies explanation. But it is the comfort of Christ and he is our companion in suffering. The Lord becomes a very real, a very present help in a time of trouble, and I found that to be true.

**RANDY:** That's so good. I appreciate you so much. Listen, some of you will want to pick this book up. In fact, we will send it to you today if you will help us as we reach out to those who are suffering, people who feel like no one sees them. People who are in physical pain. You can be the expression of God in their lives today. And if you want to Andrea's book, *Incurable Faith*, we ask you to participate in this outreach, Mission Feeding, and we will happily send it to you. But either way, you need to know today, God is with you. He sees you in your suffering. He is there for comfort and to give you an eternal perspective to see what's important as you go through your pain.

But for those of you who feel compelled by the Lord to join us in this, watch this quickly, and then we will tell you how you can reach others with the love of Christ.

### **On the mission field**

**Announcer:** Within the life of every child is God-given potential. We can see it in the dreams these children have for their future. Though he lives a meager life and has few possessions, Fernando dreams of moving to a city to become an architect. He'll design a school for Antonio, who dreams of becoming a teacher. He'll design a hospital for Rosa, who dreams of becoming a doctor. Who would have thought children with so little would have dreams so big?

But Fernando's mother knows that his chances for realizing his dreams are slim. She knows the painful reality that his food supply is unstable at best. And during lean months completely depleted. Already the scarcity of food has led to the deaths of many children. And with it their chance of a dream extinguished.

The biggest obstacle for children like Fernando is simply the lack of food—food! It's as simple as that. By helping to provide just one child like Fernando with a daily bowl of

food you'll be making a world of difference; not only for him but for every child who is holding on to a dream.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** These children have big dreams! And I want to help them keep those dreams alive by keeping them alive. That little guy that was just holding that bowl at the very end, Randy, it's just like, could you? Would you? Would you help? I mean we're thinking we've got to keep them alive but they're dreaming outside of even that, probably not even realizing that it comes down to that bowl of food for many of these children. The very life that is represented in this bowl keeps them alive, not just their bodies but their dreams. They want to go on to do great big things.

I think that's what I love so much about being a part of this. When I get to go over there and I'm stoop—scooping out of that big goodness, what is that?

**RANDY:** Barrel?

**TAMMY:** Yes! Yes! Right, and I'm filling that up and I'm passing it on. It's like God bless you! God bless you! It's so exciting. But it's also heartbreaking when you know there's a significant need out there and if he doesn't step in many of them will stop dreaming.

**RANDY:** The worst thing in the world, and I think you went to it, I know I've been to it in Angola, is the cemetery where they've already pre-dug the graves. They dig graves with the expectation based on past experience that those graves will soon be filled. And they're short graves and you know it is children. It is heartbreaking. It's very hard to see.

And that's why, the hope of Mission Feeding, Tammy, is that hope of a future. Because we go in that emergency time and we get them through that stretch. And most of our

feeding programs are in schools. You know this as well, we're in schools. This is a comprehensive program that we're talking about here, and it is effective, it works. It gives children a future. And it gives us the opportunity to share the love of Christ with them. And you can't help but wonder if maybe this is God's way of taking a bad situation where there is hunger and starvation and death and making it something good so they hear the gospel. They hear that hope for a future in Christ. So much going on here. Our part is obedience, the results are up to God.

In fact, your gift of \$30 today will help feed three children for the next three months. A gift of \$50 will feed five children for the next several months. Many of you can give \$100 for ten children. Some of you can give \$1,000 or more, which will give that opportunity to a hundred, maybe hundreds of children. I'm just asking you to do what you can, what God puts on your heart to give them that hope and a future.

This is something we can do. But we can only do it with your support. Will you go to the phone or go online and make the best gift you can?

### **Begin video clip**

**ANNOUNCER:** Right now across the continent of Africa, children are suffering facing severe malnutrition and even death. Severe drought and famine, including in crisis areas like Ethiopia, means we must replenish food supplies immediately to keep feeding 350,000 children and help reach more people in desperate need.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months. With your gift of any amount, we'll send *The Blessing of Taking Communion*. In this book, discover how the sacred ordinance of communion helps to feed your soul and reminds you of the transformative power of receiving the Lord's Supper.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the LIFE Legacy Journal. This beautiful journal and pen will help you write your personal story and share the experiences that made you who you are. One day, the generations that follow will be able to look back and learn from the legacy you've left behind.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** Thank you so much for coming alongside us in this vision that we are so passionate about. And listen, we want to send you this book, *Incurable Faith*. It's probably something that you think you might want but I believe it is something that you need today. So when you call and partner with us, we want to make sure to send this to you. Just be sure to request it and we'll get it right out.

Andrea, my goodness, what a blessing it is to have you here. I know what it took to get here so thank you for giving this gift to all of us today that are watching at *Life Today*. We truly love you and care about you. And I will pray for you often, I promise you that. Thank you so much for watching. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*!