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Week 34: WFL Last Week
Randy Robison and Tammy Trent
Kathie Lee Gifford

In the studio

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Tammy is with me and we're so excited. We have someone that I know our audience absolutely loves. We're excited to have her back. Kathie Lee Gifford is with us. She has a new book called *Herod and Mary*. That's not two people you put together typically. What is that about? We're going to find out. I know you're excited to get to talk to your neighbor.

TAMMY: Yes! I found out we both live in Tennessee. I'm in Brentwood, she is in Franklin. I read the entire book, Randy. I walked away learning things I didn't even know I needed to know. But that's what's so great about this book. So much great stuff!

RANDY: Well, let's welcome Kathie Lee. Kathie, good to see you!

KATHIE: Well, Tammy, nice to meet you. I've met Randy before but I want to thank you. We put a lot of work into the books that we wrote—well, I and with other people. We're very, very careful to do the research and just be faithful.

TAMMY: What I loved about it is your depth, the knowledge of the word, your pursuit of truth, and things that I thought that I knew, even about Herod, I just didn't know. Why was it so important for you to write this book about Herod and Mary?

KATHIE: You know, it is a series of new books and we're hoping that it will do well enough that we can do maybe ten of them. Everybody is talking so much today about the evil in the world; there is so much more evil in the world. Actually, evil has been in the world since the Garden of Eden. It just has been. There was no cable news network then. But what's also been

ancient evil, what's always been true as well is there's been living hope right next to it—living hope. So that's the series name, "Ancient evil, living hope." The first one is about Herod, who called himself "the king of the Jews." He wasn't even a Jew. The Jews hated him. And then "Living Hope" is Mary because just at the time, as you know because you've read the book, just as Herod's unbelievable evil life was coming to an end, he was just—he was going around his palace in Jericho going, "Mariamne! Mariamne!" The only woman he had ever truly loved in his whole life and he had murdered her. He murdered almost everybody in his family, and anybody that was his enemy, politically. I didn't know that about him.

And then juxtapose that with the birth of Mary, this beautiful, beautiful, elegant, godly, pure woman going down to give birth to the Messiah. There is no greater honor anybody has ever been given in all of history than was given to Mary, to bring the Messiah into the world. And what did she say? "Let it be unto me as you have said." That's such a message for all of us today in life. Because the Lord is asking something of us right now, today too, every one of us who calls ourselves believers. I want to be able to say every single day what Mary said, "Let it be unto me, Lord as you say."

So anyway, I love the idea and it truly was my son's idea of mom living—when I went to Israel and learned about Herod, I'd only known a few little things about him from the scriptures. There is very little. But when I got there and I started studying, I said, oh my gosh. If Jesus is the greatest story ever told, which we all know he is, then Herod is the greatest story never told.

RANDY: Kathie Lee, it is easy for us to just curse the darkness but Jesus called himself the light of the world. If we want to battle this evil, we have to hold up the light as you know. What is it about Mary that you connect with that touches you so deeply? Because obviously, you feel some sort of connection there.

KATHIE: Well, I think everybody feels a connection to Mary. She was probably about 13, 14 years old when the Holy Spirit came upon her. I was that age when I asked Jesus into my heart in a movie theater in Annapolis, Maryland, watching a movie that Billy Graham's organization had put out called "The Restless Ones." And I knew that Jesus spoke so clearly to

me. Said, "Kathie, I love you. I love you. And if you will trust me, I will make something beautiful out of your life."

So it is the same thing. The angel came to Mary and said if you will trust Jesus, if you will trust God, he will make something beautiful and magnificent—the Magnificat, that's what she wrote, out of your life. I think as a young woman, I just always related to the fact that—what would I have said to the angel? What would my response have been? I'd like to think I would say what Mary said, "How could this be?" How could it be? She was a virgin; she had never ever been with a man. I was too when I was that age. There is an innocence about you. You don't know what that's all about. You just know that God wants you to be a woman who trusts him.

Look at women who later in life after living very, very hard lives, Mary Magdalene, seven demons, all the prostitutes, all these women certainly were not virgins but the beauty of their story is that they met Jesus, and Jesus saw them as pure. Jesus saw them as wrapped in a robe of righteousness. He saw them as beautiful, beautiful creations of Father God.

And that's why women respond to Jesus like they did. Women had never been treated equally in the culture and they still aren't all around the world. But back then, they were just considered like maybe a third, maybe two-thirds of a man, dependent on where they live. They were never considered full and valuable creatures made in the image of God at all.

And here comes Jesus, here comes Jesus and he knows their names. Don't you love that the first person he saw when he came from the tomb, and Mary Magdalene didn't recognize him at the tomb because it was early? She said, "Where have you taken my Lord? Tell me where you've taken him. I will come and get him." And all he had to do, you guys, I think this is my favorite scripture in the whole Bible. She said, "Tell me where my Lord is and I will come and take him away."

And he said, "Mary!" He said her name. Instantly, she knew it was Jesus because she had heard him so many times say her name in such love. This woman probably had been seduced by 100 men, a thousand men, who knows? All her life. Demons tormenting her. And Jesus just says,

"Mary." It is the most beautiful scripture in the whole Bible to me because that's what he says to me when I'm hurting. That's what he says to you, Randy and Tammy. That's what he says to all of us. He knows us by name.

TAMMY: Yes! I think that's the greatest gift, Kathie Lee, to me too. When you talk I can feel the same emotion because I think no matter what I've gone through in life, to know that I'm seen, that my life matters, what I've gone through matters, the details of my life, the good and the bad, the ups and the down, I'm never abandoned, that God is walking everything out with me, I think is the greatest gift to think that you could hear the voice of God.

KATHIE: He is a personal God. He is a personal God.

TAMMY: Yes, he is.

KATHIE: And people don't know that and it is just—it breaks my heart. I try to spend my whole life in—my ministry has been in the entertainment world but it was always my mission field. It was my mission was always to tell people that God loves them. Entertain them, make them laugh, you can be bawdy, you can be silly, you can be all these things but make sure people know that I love them, Kathie. Nothing else matters, you guys. Nothing else matters!

RANDY: One of the questions that people ask is if God is a good God how could he allow such evil in our world? And you're contrasting the evil with hope. What do you see and what do you say to those who look around the world today and think, where is God? If God is here, where is he?

KATHIE: I understand the question and I've asked it myself just recently. Believe me, it never gets old. [Laughing] Here's the thing. God never wanted us to know evil in the world. He created a garden for us. He created perfection for us and put us there to love each other and to have communication with him. He wanted to walk with us in the garden. He wanted to see what we were going to build. He wanted to see what we were going to name the animals. He wanted community with us.

We're the ones that created the evil that's in the world today. Don't blame it on God. Gave us perfection and we made it into a slum. It is our fault. And it is our fault individually and it is our fault collectively. And when people blame God, I just go, what did God ever do to you? No! Uh-uh. I will not let anybody ever get away with that. That's so easy so you can say I don't believe in God because he wouldn't do that. No, he didn't do that. We did.

RANDY: And he went through extraordinary lengths to bring salvation to us. One thing I appreciate, and really love about your work, is the rabbinic learning, the context, the place, and the culture, it was an amazing thing to see the setup for Christ in the way that even Rome, which was awful, God was able to turn that for good to use it to pave the way for Christ, and then for Christianity to go forth. What do you say when you look at Rome in sort of its impact on the gospel?

KATHIE: Well, because Rome was this center of the universe to humankind at the time, but it wasn't the center of God's universe. I have always been fascinated by history. I love history and when I get down into the weeds of history with Herod, the next book is going to be about Nero, and—basically, the story is nothing has changed. God gave us goodness. God gave us perfection. God gave us great blessings and we chose to try to be like God. And we ruined it; we've ruined it ever since, and then we blame God for it. We're doing it now. We're doing it now.

So Rome is no different than America is today. We've got everybody all over the world and none of them, none of them know Jesus, none of them know God and they're all trying to be God. All of them. And they can't be and they never will be.

The point of our book is that ancient evil is the same as present-day evil. It's there. But what's the most exciting thing is that—but living hope—our living hope. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." I know a lot of my people, my friends who are not believers will say, "Well, that's so intolerant! What do you mean?"

People don't understand that when Jesus said that, that's the best news in the whole world. If

you're going to have the one person who is there to make sure you get into paradise, okay, hang with me here, if it is Jesus, he is the only one out of all these so-called gods and religions and everything else, he's the only one who gave up glory and died for you. Suffered the most agonizing death you could have at that time, was crucifixion. And people don't even know, you learn from my book that crucifixion, back in the times of Jesus, was not done on a hill where you saw some people hanging from crosses. No, it was at eye level; eye level on the road where everybody could see how you were suffering. And you were naked; you didn't have the thing around you that you see in pictures. No, you were stark naked so you were shamed to begin with, and then you were right here so that people could look at your suffering. You could basically tell them by your suffering, don't mess with Rome. This is what will happen to you.

TAMMY: That's right. Can I ask you something? Okay, I read your book and I have my own takeaway, which was what you talked about. I even wrote it down. I'm so glad I read it, truly. I got through chapters one, two, and three and I'm telling you, I had to look at Siri and talk into my phone so many times and say, "Pronounce this word for me." Or "Tell me where this place is." There was so much history there that I felt like I was learning along the way. So by chapter four, I was all in.

And so I think about when people were passing by this book, looking at *Herod and Mary*, what, and they're contemplating whether or not they want to read this book, what do you hope that readers will take away when they turn that last page?

KATHIE: Well, I was doing maybe an audio version of the book a couple of weeks ago and when I got to the end of it, I was sobbing—sobbing, sobbing. You know the scene I'm talking about. And I just went—I just couldn't get through it. I could not get through it. It took me a long time. I remember thinking, Jesus, I hope that when people get to the end of this book, they will have the hope. They will have the hope that the man on the cross who had been crucified ends with a scene between Mary and somebody being crucified. Mary was coming back from Egypt when Herod died, this horrible death that Herod deserved. Jesus did not deserve the death he died from. But Mary has an interaction with somebody who is right like this to her. I can't tell the end because she feels Jesus stirring under her cloak because they're going back to Nazareth. The

same angel had come and said, "It is safe. The men who are trying to kill her are dead. Go! Go home." You know the scene I'm talking about. And so the ending of it is so profound. That's what I want everybody to get to. Get to the end of it because you will realize if there's hope for that man, hanging on a cross dying an agonizing death, if there is hope for him, there is hope for anybody.

RANDY: We want to put this book in your hands if you'd like it, *Herod and Mary*. We will tell you how to get that when you support our outreach today. But I have to say really quickly. If you don't know this Christ that we're talking about, stop right now. We have a telephone number, we're going to put it on the screen here, where you can call and talk to somebody and they will introduce you to our living hope, as Kathie Lee calls it. Because Christ is the hope, wherever you're at. Whatever evil you have suffered. Whatever difficulty you're facing, you need to know this living hope. So if you don't know Christ as your Savior, or if you just need some encouragement, call that prayer line, we want to pray with you.

Now we're going to show you something, a situation, Tammy, that you know about, where people are in desperate hope. And we can be the answer in that situation. So will you watch this? And when you support this outreach, to be that hope to someone, you can request Kathie Lee's book, *Herod and Mary*. We'll send it to you today. Watch this.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: Right now, people around the world are suffering the effects of a deadly poison. And there is little they can do to avoid it.

Open captions

>> My name is Beatrice, and I am from Glalay, New Town. I have been very sick with diarrhea and lost a lot of blood. My grandsons all have a problem with the drinking water. One of them was so severe, we took him to the hospital. The doctor said our drinking water was the source of our problems. I knew that sometimes his face could be puffed up.

ANNOUNCER: The deadly poison of unsafe water takes a toll on every victim it touches. In the most tragic cases, the poison takes that which cannot be given back.

Open captions

>> We lost our mother because of unclean water. She died with a swollen stomach. Since my mom's death, we've had such tragedy in our family. Our life is not good. Even my siblings are getting diarrhea from drinking the unclean water.

BETTY: As I'm here with this little child, as precious as he is, he is probably between two and three years old, maybe four, but you know he may not make it past five, four, or five if he doesn't have the water he needs. He has water but it is contaminated. And so many more people like him all around the world, they need our help. Children like this, we want to see them grow up and have a chance in life. Let God touch your heart and let's help these precious children.

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: We talk a lot about the children and how vital it is to reach them, precious little bodies can't process this kind of dirty, unclean, contaminated water. And in a story like that, it just is like the wind is knocked out of me when I see this precious little family of children talking about losing their mother. This deadly contaminated poisonous water is affecting the entire family. Not only are they losing children in these villages but they're losing their parents also. I just can't imagine what that must feel like to have to live especially without your mother. My mom means so much to me and I just can't imagine the pain that that must bring these little children.

So when I sit here today to share my heart with you, and together we're watching the story, I just think, God, what can I do? What can we do as your people, as people of God? What can we do to help bring hope when we see a need in front of us? There is a need right now in front of us today and it is urgent for these children and for their parents and for hundreds of thousands just like

them. Today is the day to take action, to bring change, to be the hope for these families and these children so that they can thrive and live and survive and flourish.

Randy, I love being a part of that. We know that there is a solution. We couldn't sit here and watch story after story like this every day and not find some kind of settle in our soul if we didn't know there was a way to help these people.

RANDY: Absolutely. It is tragic. You see whole families being devastated as Tammy pointed out. Because every time any of them takes a drink of water they're gambling with their lives. Some of them, they try to filter it. They are doing all that they can. That's the bottom line. You need to know that. These people are doing all they can to not die from the water. But it's not going to—it just doesn't work. But you and I can stop that cycle.

Here's my question for you. Are you doing all that you can to stop the death? Are we? That's what we ask here. Are we doing all we can? 350 wells across 20 nations sounds like a lot but when you're that child who has lost your mother, it is not enough. So I want us to do all that we can to stop the death cycle. \$4800 is the average cost; that will drill one well. Listen, if you can drill one well today, maybe two, maybe three, do it! You will be giving water with each well to an average of 1,000 people. If you can't drill a whole well, I completely understand. That's why you can come together with others and give \$144 for 30 people, and \$48 for 10 people.

This is the last week we'll be talking about this on the air but the campaign will continue. It only works when we come together. Tammy, you and I, the viewers, the missionaries in the field, we have to come together and stop the death. Will you do your part? Will you go online, go to the phone, and make the best gift you can? We can do more. We can save lives! You and I together can give them Water for LIFE.

Video begins

ANNOUNCER: Every day thousands of lives are lost to a waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, now in its 25th year,

you could give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is 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 help provide for ten. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you the "God's Word for My Day" devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily reading, an encouraging verse, and a thought to ponder for each day of the year.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "His Word is Life" tumbler set. These two 20-ounce stainless steel tumblers each inscribed with a scripture will inspire you throughout the day and help keep your drinks well-insulated while at home or on the go.

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 beautiful bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

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

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: You can give that living hope through that cup of water. This is the last week we'll be talking about this on the air. But you can be a blessing all year round. Please go to the phone, go online, make the best gift you can. Today, if you will request *Herod and Mary* we will gladly send that to you to bless your life.

Kathie Lee, thank you so much for being a blessing to us today!

KATHIE: Thank you. Thank you, guys. Bless you, bless you, bless you!

TAMMY: Yes, thank you so so much! God bless you also. So glad you were here today and we'll see you next time on *Life Today*!