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Week 12: Rescue Life

James and Betty Robison

Jason Jones

Studio discussion:

JAMES: Well, I'm going to introduce you to somebody I've kind of known from overseas. He was away a good bit, traveling to all kinds of places and had a really tough background. But boy, does he love the poor and the overlooked. And does he fight for life. His name is Jason Jones. If you read "The Stream," you've read him a lot, and that's on purpose. He's not going to stop being there. He's a good friend of John Zmirak who a lot of you respect. They respect each other like crazy. They build each other up. I'm sure carry each other up sometimes, trying to be sure you understand because both of them are brilliant.

But Jason Jones is here. I want you to tell us the names of the different ministries and what you're doing because I want all of you who are watching, not only to get to know him and what he's doing, what's on his heart, and what he's going to put on your heart to pray about, in many instances, perhaps to help. But I want you to share, Jason, what you believe God's people, who would like to do God's kingdom will on his earth, could hear from you that would be a help and an inspiration. So welcome to *Life Today*.

JASON: It's a privilege to be here, James. Thank you for having me. It's surreal. You both have played such a role. I didn't become a believer until my late 20s, or early 30s, and you were there without knowing it every step of the way. As a writer at "The Stream," it's the first place in 30 years as a writer where I feel at home as someone who wants to draw from the gospel of Jesus Christ but apply it to contemporary, political problems, and social problems. I never felt at home. So, I want to thank you for "The Stream."

I heard you speak as a young man. I had a little radio show in Hawaii, and I went to NRB 2001, and you were both on stage. As you shared this beautiful story about your relationship together, I was struck. I said this man I was in awe.

JAMES: You were real young then.

JASON: Oh, yeah. I remember every word of that speech. I was like -- this was over 20 years ago. And, I said, "This man loves us more than he cares about how we think of him." He's not thinking about himself. He's thinking about us as men and the problems that we have and that we will face. I just said, "I want to be like that. I want to think more about the people I'm talking to than myself," as a young, insecure person at the time. So that shaped me as a communicator. I just want to thank both of you for that.

JAMES: Tell us because all of your articles on "The Stream," Stream.org, you can go there every day -- and I want them to see him in so many diverse people, so uniquely designed, and supernaturally brought together. I hope you'll go to "The Stream" and read Jason.

Jason, what do you want us to hear related to what God has shown you and put on your heart? You've seen the persecuted. You've seen that you have the desire to save every little baby in the womb. You want to save every person you can who's been overlooked. You talk about someone who loves the overlooked. But also, the persecuted, defeated, and even imprisoned Christians and believers all over the world. You've got a burden there. You've literally put your arms around as many of them as you can.

What do you want our viewers to hear and understand and not only pray about but even with the Outreaches of LIFE, help us undergird? Tell the family of God that's watching. Because here's what I promise you. People are watching out here who like to see after the least of these, to reach out and put his arms around the people that thought they'd never be noticed. People want to feed the hungry, give clean water to the thirsty -- give water to the thirsty. These people want people to know Christ. And they want people to return to the principles necessary to make a nation great and keep it great.

So, you've got viewers that I think initially care about what God has on his heart. Help inspire us to know how we can better understand, better focus, and better work together. Share with us anything you believe God, through your vision and your travels would want us to hear.

JASON: Thank you, James. As a young atheist, I read Ecclesiastes 4:1 and it struck me. Solomon, the richest man, powerful man, said, "I look all over the world, and all I see is oppression. And on the side of the oppressor is power, and on the side of the oppressed there is no one." That to me was the most sorrowful line I had ever read.

But I've come to understand as a Christian that it's no longer like that. You can say, I look all over the world and all I see is oppression, and on the side of the oppressor is power. But on the side of the oppressed is the body of Christ. I can say I've seen your ministries work all over the world. Where I am, where I work, I see your work, I see your audience, I see their hands and I see their feet.

This morning I was on the phone with Brad Phillips of the Persecution Project Foundation, and together we're evacuating Christians from Khartoum into the Nuba mountains. And you've been a big supporter of Brad's.

JAMES: Basically, when he was kind of a kid. I was really close to his dad when he was shaking the nation. So, I love him. Hi, Brad!

JASON: We love Brad. He's the bravest man I've ever met. The kindest man.

JAMES: No doubt! Fearless, tireless!

JASON: Fearless, tireless. He's a bull and he has no fear. I can tell you Brad Phillips' stories all day long. I know you played an important role in his father coming to the Lord.

But I was on the phone with Brad today. I remember when Brad was on your show many, many, like two decades ago and I called Brad. I said, “So, how much of that support are you going to see when you're on the show?”

He says, “Can I tell you something? They send me more than they raise for me.” He said, “I'm going to tell you something. They send me more than they raise for me when I'm on the show.”

When I was a young man, a young atheist, my mom had me when she was 16, and my mother was married and divorced a bit. So, as a young boy, I just wanted to be strong. My dream was to grow up to be a strong man who could protect his mother, protect his siblings. One day would have a family of his own that I would protect. That was my daydream, actually. When my mom would be going through problems with her husband at the time or whatever, I would go into my room, I would lie in my bed, and I would daydream about how strong I was going to be. I was a football player and a wrestler as I grew up and got bigger and stronger.

Then as a young boy, actually two days before my 17th birthday, on a Saturday morning, my high school girlfriend rode her bicycle over to my house and woke me up with the words, “I'm pregnant.” You would think I would be scared. But actually, I was excited. I remember thinking, now is my chance to be a strong man and to be a protector and to be a provider. My high school girlfriend came from a family of abuse as well. We put together a plan that I would join the Army and she would hide the pregnancy until I got back from basic training. We would tell our parents.

On my birthday, I went down to the recruiter. I knew this program because a friend had just entered it. I went down to the recruiter and on my 17th birthday, I began the process of enlisting in the Army. It wasn't too much longer that I was off to Fort Benning, Georgia. I was going to be an infantryman. While I was in basic training, I didn't want to go to church so I told the drill sergeants on Sundays when everyone else went to church, I told him I was an atheist, and I didn't believe in God. “You can't make me go to church.” So they said, “That's okay! But we can make you clean pots and pans every Sunday.” So every Sunday I was called “Pots and Pans Boy.”

I was cleaning pots and pans on a Sunday morning, it was actually two weeks before basic training was to end, and a soldier came running in. He said, "Jones, your girlfriend's on the phone and she's crying." So, I ran out and answered the phone. She was crying like I never heard anyone in my life cry. She just kept saying, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I'm sorry." And then her father said, "We know your secret, and your secret's gone. I took her to get an abortion."

Right at that moment, a drill sergeant hung up the phone. I punched my drill sergeant. Another sergeant dragged me into my captain's office. I was fortunate that my drill sergeants were very thoughtful. They sat me down and they cared for me. But I didn't know that destroying a child in the womb was legal until I found out that my child was destroyed. We didn't go to church. We weren't involved in politics. This was before cable news. I didn't know much about anything.

It was that experience that here I was, I thought I was strong. I was an athlete, now I'm a soldier, and I was impotent to protect my own child. The child that I daydreamed about protecting, that my child will never know, they'll never know violence, they'll never know hunger, they'll never know fear, and so that struck me. Then as a young infantryman, I realized we live in a violent world. Lots of fathers are in positions where they can't protect their child.

That's where I got the idea for my organization, The Vulnerable People Project, and I was not yet a Christian. So this was in my mind as a young soldier, that one day I'm going to start an organization that protects the vulnerable. Actually, in my mind, I'm going to stand with fathers. When you have a family placed in an impossible situation, they're not weak, they're vulnerable. They're actually very strong. You may have a young woman who's been abused since the moment she came out of the womb herself, and then she walks into a crisis pregnancy center thinking it's an abortion clinic looking for help. That's not a weak, young woman. That's sadly, a young woman who may be very strong, too strong, but she's placed in an impossible situation.

So I had this idea that I want to help strong families and strong men who are placed in impossible situations, defend their families. When you think about it, a lot of the work we do is

working with orphans. Well, no father has been put in a more helpless position to defend his family, than a father who's dead. So, we work in Afghanistan caring for the widows and orphans of our Afghan allies who were killed in action. We've distributed millions of meals and millions of hours of heat through coal to these families. And as a former infantryman myself, I'm so grateful.

The Ranger creed is "Never shall I leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy." And so, probably, my favorite program is what we call "Coal for Christmas." We distribute coal and food and balloons and little knickknacks and toys across Afghanistan to the orphans of men who died fighting alongside American forces who, tragically, we have abandoned that country in a very ham-fisted way.

But people don't understand. You're in Afghanistan, you're in Iraq, you're in the West Bank in Gaza, you're in Sudan, and you're fighting abortion and you're making movies. What does this all have to do with -- from the very beginning for me, it's all been the same thing, standing between the vulnerable and the violent. Protecting strong people placed in impossible situations.

That's what we are called to do as a Christian. That's what the body of Christ is to do. Our organization doesn't proselytize. When you're pulling somebody out of a burning building it's not the best time to proselytize. But how many of the people we serve who come to accept Jesus Christ is overwhelming. We hear their stories all the time because we're showing them the love of Christ through serving them in really challenging circumstances.

We never give up. We have, I will say our organization through the Holy Spirit has been blessed with fortitude. With the last organization that we know of in Afghanistan, we promised them that we would be with them till the end. And we will not leave one Afghan ally alone. We're going to be with them until they're all safe, whether it's in Afghanistan or they're resettled.

JAMES: Let me tell you this. This is one of the missionaries, the type of people we help when we tell you about the people that plant themselves in the midst of hell with the loving arms of God outreached and a heart full of God's love flowing, here's an example.

I want you to tell our viewers where they can find how they can help your organization directly if they want to. Where would they go online to find the fastest way?

JASON: Our website is VulnerablePeopleProject.com. It's www.VulnerablePeopleProject.com. I have all my "Stream" articles there. I've been writing a lot lately. I write when I'm angry. I've been angry a lot. I've been passionate a lot. There's a lot of sorrow and suffering in the world right now. But vulnerablepeopleproject.com. You can look to see the work that we do.

One of our other favorite programs is we provide security guards, solar, and security cameras, and security guards for the most vulnerable Christian communities across Nigeria. We also provide security for the very last synagogue in Nigeria. This is our commitment to the one thing that -- we work in India with the Dalits right now. There's a real uptick in Hindu nationalist violence in India because so many people across the different caste systems are converting to Christianity. The Dalit, the untouchables, they go from thinking -- imagine it's not what others think about the Dalits in India, it's what they think about themselves. They go from thinking that they're not even human to realizing that they've been made in the image and likeness of the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving creator of the cosmos. That's a big switch!

I never used to like when coming into Christianity as an atheist, I never liked that term, "Good news." That sounds a little cheesy. I don't know. What does that mean? Good news? But then when you realize, as I do through our work, wade into pre-gospel communities, you realize it is really good news to know who you are, who made you, and why you were made. And so, when you're born into a Christian, even post-Christian society, it may have a strange sound. But for me, especially working with the Dalit, it's really good news. So you see an uptick in violence. But the greatest gift is someone who was a hardcore atheist until his late 20s, it's that Christianity lets people know the truth about themselves, their incomparable dignity, beauty, and worth. Francis Schaefer always called that the pre-evangelization. People don't even know

how important they are anymore. They don't know how beautiful or how dignified they are. We know that about them.

BETTY: Do you have a personal story? I know you probably have many, somebody you could share with us who saw this change, this vulnerability that you talk about in different facets of their life, that changed their whole life?

JASON: We do see this a lot with so many of the communities. They wonder what we have up our sleeves. Why are you helping me? What's the real motive? Do you know what I mean?

BETTY: Yeah. They don't trust.

JASON: They don't trust, and I understand this. When you're dealing with vulnerable or broken communities, you have to accept that they're not going to be trusting. In fact, there's a woman, her name was -- in Aswan, a wonderful woman, her name was Nahum Kafoury. She was a Swedish doctor who would allow herself to be captured by ISIS so that she could provide care for the women captured by ISIS. I was talking to her, and one of the communities that she was serving got upset with her for something. She bought an ambulance with her own money and they destroyed her ambulance. And Rene Girard, this French anthropologist said, "What the gospel teaches us is this. When you stand with the vulnerable, you become indistinguishable from the vulnerable you're standing with to the mob trying to destroy them." I said when you stand with the vulnerable, you become as vulnerable as they are." She said something really profound. She said, "Just because you stand with the vulnerable doesn't mean you have the right to expect their gratitude."

So oftentimes, we find at the beginning there's this fear or this distrust. But then over time, and this is where the evangelization comes in, they begin to see themselves as how you see them. I love when I see that happen. We just evacuated 12 girls from Pakistan who we had to take from Afghanistan into Pakistan because they were wounded. ISIS blew up their school, it was a girls' school. ISIS blew up their school. We took them for initial medical treatment in Pakistan and then we brought them to Canada.

Well, I'm a father. I have seven children and four grandchildren. And as someone who's a father, I kind of look through the eyes of my ministry as a father. So the week we brought them to Canada, it was around Christmas time, I said, "We're sending them to 'The Nutcracker.'" They had never even seen ballet. So, they got to go to this, I think it's the Royal Theater in Toronto. They got to see one of the best troupes in the world perform "The Nutcracker." The Afghan girl who runs our program, and she herself was initially evacuated because she served -- German NATO forces, she had to flee. She said to me that she had become a Christian. She said, "Now I see your work through the eyes of a Christian. I always wondered, why are they doing this? But now I know why you're doing this. Because you see these young girls as made in the image and likeness of God."

JAMES: Even though we're right in Rescue Life, I want to talk about Jason. This is one of the most God-sent, God-filled, God-changed individuals we've ever known. It's the first time he's gotten to interact with us in person even though our ministry has touched him for years.

Father, I just want an outpouring of love today. I want people right now to be thinking, I'm going to get my bank card, checkbook, and God, I want to write the biggest check I can possibly write to do the biggest job of putting your arms around people becoming a miracle, giving them life. Lord, please give us the greatest response I've ever seen.

Would you right now, put your arms, literally, please, around all these people we can help? I want you to watch this video showing you a glimpse of what we can do. We can actually add a building. We can add 50 fabulous rooms but we're going to need an extra over \$1 million. I want you to watch this. I want you to know a whole lot of what we're doing is going to go to help him. I want you to find out what he's doing because you can see Jesus all over Jason, just like we've seen from a distance, and through his writings for years, not even realizing how much our ministry had meant to him, starting all the way back when he was young. Please watch and respond as God leads.

Transition roll-in:

TAMMY: Here I am in Southeast Asia, spending another day with one of our incredible missionary partners on the ground. They will go to every length possible to reach these girls to rescue them, and to give them a new life. I've been able to see that today. I've been able to hear that today. And I want you to hear it for yourself. I'm going to protect her identity and her name, but we'll call her Soka.

>> When I was 13 years old, I started working at a bar to get some money and take care of my family. The customers would beat me, but I still had to serve them drinks. But then I was told I had to sleep with the customers, and they would hit me and make me take drugs. It was like being in hell.

One day I heard about this ministry and how they could teach me to do a new job. I wanted to try it, but I still felt like I didn't belong anywhere but the bar. Slowly, God began to enter my heart. And now I know that God loves me. He's always near me, and he has given me great joy and hope for my future. I thank God for this ministry, my new friends, and my new job. I pray every day for women like me who feel hopeless and worthless. I pray that they can join me here and learn how much God loves them.

TAMMY: God is on the move in Southeast Asia. She's just one girl. She's one. And she represents so many other girls that need that same hope today. If we don't try to make a difference today, I don't know where they'll be tomorrow.

Studio appeal:

JAMES: Do you know how much somebody who loves puts it in the hands of love can get God's arms around the broken? Betty, we've been doing it a long, long time.

BETTY: We have.

JAMES: I want to do it a lot longer. But I can't do any of it. All I can do is show you a sad situation, and we could weep, and we could say a prayer and walk away. Or we can find a way to put our hands out with something that we'll put in the hands of those who have hands-on, and we'll put arms around, and we'll get involved to rescue these girls. And now even provide 50 more rooms in a beautiful building that we're renovating but we need \$1.25 million to do it.

Father, you are the miracle. You're the one who makes miracles happen, but we're the ones who provide the miracle with your love flowing through us. Move everyone watching, in Jesus' name.

Would you go and get your bank card and use it like a check? Get a check. Make a gift to LIFE. I know by now, you remember \$128 is what it takes to rescue one child. \$1280, ten. Would you please right now just make the gift God leads you to make? We have some beautiful gifts. Here is Dr. Jeremiah's beautiful devotional book, *Sleep on This*. My goodness! And you can put a place there that's new technology that will play it to you beautifully by someone who is gifted to read these great devotionals. And these cups, Betty, I mean, they're the prettiest cups I've ever seen. They have a beautiful scripture on each one of them. Ceramic. Then "The Lion of Judah" with the cross; that's my favorite one we've ever done. We've been doing them for 25-30 years. Maybe longer than that. And boy, do people like them. You're going to like this one.

Please make the gift God put on your heart. Remember, you're giving life. You are providing the miracle that changes everything for people who never thought they'd have a chance. Thank you.

Rescue Life Cause Spot:

ANNOUNCER: *Innocent children longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold into the evil industry of human trafficking. Through Mission: Rescue Life, your gift today of only \$128 will help reach, rescue, or restore a child and change their destiny forever. Gifts of \$64 or \$32 will be combined with support from others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of sexual slavery. Currently, one of our Rescue Centers in Southeast Asia is at maximum capacity. With the need never*

greater, we need to secure and renovate a new Rescue home that will offer refuge and restoration for up to 50 trafficking survivors. Please consider an additional gift as we urgently need \$1.25 million above our normal budget to secure and renovate this place of hope. With a gift of any amount, we'll send you Sleep on This by Dr. David Jeremiah. This nightly devotional will help you let go of your anxieties and rest in peace as you reflect on inspiring promises from God's word.

With a gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the elegant mug set, "A Beautiful Morning." Both generously sized mugs are inscribed with encouraging scriptures to begin your new day. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will help save 10 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

Field appeal:

JOHN: So I'm here in Southeast Asia, where our mission partners came to us just a few months ago and told us that they're out of beds for girls that are being rescued from trafficking. The SWAT teams have had to slow down their work because there's no more places for girls to stay. And so, we've stepped out in faith to provide a new home, a new Life Center here and we need your help. It's desperate. We have secured a facility. The facility has to be renovated, and it has to be made safe. We have the teams, we have the people ready to go. But we have to have your help financially to be able to make the project work.

So, please, we're asking you to join us here now, immediately, so that we can make sure that young girls who are facing the horrific battle of being trafficked, and then rescued, now needing to be restored. So we need your help. We need you to go online or go to the phone right now. Call in, and make the very best gift you can. But we need your help. And we need it right now.

Studio good-bye:

JAMES: Well, I'm just believing God for a miracle. Jason, you're a miracle. All the people you help in all those places, Muslim countries, very dangerous countries. Thank you.

Thank you! Gosh, I wish I could put our arms around you to tell you how much he loves you and how much he says thank you for sharing my love with the least of these. Thank you.