

7/7/25 From 3/9/17

Week 28: WFL

James & Betty Robison

Steven Curtis Chapman

Studio discussion:

Betty: What an awesome audience tonight! Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: They came to hear me sing. I'm so good.

Betty: I don't think so.

James: See we've got a guy that's won more Grammys than anybody. I told the whole audience...

Betty: That's not you.

James: No.

[Laughter]

Why do you make fun of my singing?

Betty: Well, sometimes truth hurts.

[Laughter]

James: Let me set you back. When we get to heaven, you're going to listen to me sing the first year because I'm flat going to be able to sing in heaven. Do you believe that?

Betty: Yeah. I'm trying to.

[Laughter]

James: It's maybe too big of a miracle.

Steven: Still hard to imagine.

James: Okay. Welcome Steven Curtis Chapman to *LIFE Today*.

[Cheers & Applause]

I'm going to turn this out here. I want one of the cameras to come in and let me see pretty tight here; get a camera that can come on in on him. Now here's what I told him when I held it up. We had dinner before we came out. You may be watching this early in the morning, you may still have on your pajamas. A lot of people say, "I'm glad I can see you -- glad you can't see me." You watch it all through the day.

But I'm saying to Steven and the group that was with us, Franklin Graham happened to be there with us, and I said, "I see glory. I see the glory of God on a father." A father that lost a child. And this is the story; this is his story, the Lord's story in him, "Between heaven and the real world." I've just got to hear him tell me what he's talking about, "the real world."

Okay. Steven, what are you saying here "between heaven and the real world"? What does that mean to you when you say that?

Steven: Well... It's good to be back with you guys. Thank you for what you do. You will appreciate this because you all have been amazing examples of people who have been committed with your life and with the gifts that God has entrusted you to try to bring God's presence and reality into the real world where people are living, where you're living, where we're living.

I have for as long as I can remember, that's what I've wanted to do with the gifts that God's given me, writing songs and playing music. The first song I wrote I was 15-16 years old. I tell the story about growing up in Paducah, Kentucky in a family that didn't -- we grew up in the buckle of the Bible belt so we didn't -- my parents grew up in church but they weren't walking with the Lord. I get to share just a transformation that took place in my family's life and watching God really transform and change my parents; watching us go from a family that were a lot of trouble, a lot of struggles to just my dad who didn't have a father, whenever those troubles would come, we would end up on our knees together and I'd hear my dad pray, "God, I don't know how to do this but I know you can give me wisdom. You're the Father to all fathers. You can show me how to do this."

James: How old were you when you started having that kind of connection with what's going on?

Steven: I was 7-8 years old. But I started writing songs and I realized early on that God -- people would tell me, "God's given you a talent, given you a gift."

James: Was it the writing then at first?

Steven: At first it was just singing. I sang with my family; I grew up singing in church with my family. But I think even then I began to see even as a little boy the impact, the change in the real world that I lived in that had a lot of friction and a lot of -- they were fighting and arguing but I began to see when God's word was brought in, when there was prayer and when seeking God was brought into the middle of that it brought peace into the chaos, it brought purpose into this kind of craziness that was going on in my family.

That began to mark me even as a young man. I began to write songs really with a prayer; that I would kind of understand as time went on that it was this desire to come to know who God is and then to make him known with the gifts he had given me.

So throughout my journey and it's been an amazing, amazing journey and I began to look back on it and see that throughout my life God allowed me to get to know a man that I know you are dear friends with as well, Chuck Colson, who had such an impact in the lives of so many people. I got to go into prisons, into death row cell blocks with him and minister to inmates. I had a chance to go to the jungles of Ecuador where Jim Elliot and Nate Saint and those men were martyred and killed trying to take the gospel. I began to go and see these places and go to these places in my journey in my life that were very much the real world of brokenness and pain. And yet, in those places see how incredibly God had shown up in such a profound way.

I feel like my journey has kind of been that. It's been one foot in both this very broken real world but longing for heaven and trying to use the gifts that God's given me to point people in that direction, to share my journey, realizing that there is a whole lot that's really unfixable. I wanted to call the book Unfixable, actually when I started because I feel like so much of my story I began to realize, even as I was born into my family, my mom and dad were at a place and I share a lot about this, to really -- about to decide to give up on their marriage. It was just not working and my older brother was born and they made this really strange decision to either, they said, "I think we should either get a divorce or what if we have another child? And maybe that will help fix this."

James: You were that fix?

Steven: I was born into that situation. I kind of came riding in. Literally! And obviously, that's very much a double-edged sword because I would realize throughout my life that a whole lot of my struggles have been trying to fix everything that's broken in the world and having to constantly realize that only God can do that.

As I have gone on in my journey, ultimately and we were together talking about this, the last time we were together, and you guys since we were together have walked this road as well with the ultimate unfixable in my life and the ultimate place of having to trust God with brokenness was losing our little girl Maria and how that, as well as many other chapters in my personal story have brought me to a place to realize that the most profound places that God's shown up in my

life have been those places where I can't fix it and I have to -- it's almost like my pastor says we don't really ever cry Abba Father until we first cry "Uncle!" Until we're at a point where we have to just say, "God, I give up. I can't do this. I need you."

But it was standing in Vanderbilt Hospital, having heard the news that our little girl had gone to be with Jesus. And I never really shared this and I share in detail in the book of that experience of standing in the most darkest place I would have never even imagined standing, with my wife with me, determined to pray until my little girl started breathing again. That's when I went in. I knew the news was probably not going to be good. I was determined to go in and pray until they dragged me out of there just to say I'm not leaving until God gives our little girl back to us.

And as my wife put her hand on my back and said, "Sweetheart," just whispered to me that "I think she is with Jesus and we need to let her go." As clearly as we're sitting here talking right now, I was standing at the door of eternity. It is absolutely real and I even spoke to all the doctors, and not because I felt like it was a moment for me to make a statement or be a strong Christian, it was the first thing that came out of me was, "You stand here often as doctors and surgeons and people who experience this, and I hope you don't miss the reality of where you're standing. We're standing at the threshold, the door of heaven, eternity. It's what we were all made for, it's what God created us for. We're all going to stand at this place and my hope is that you would know the one who gives me and my wife hope to know that this story is not over yet. The story is not over yet."

Betty: When you lose someone, a child or a loved one like that, it does make heaven more precious to you. But I feel like at the same time God says, "I want to bring heaven here on earth through you as an example. You're my child and as a charge to you as my child, I want heaven to live in you that it might flow over to others so that they will receive Jesus themselves."

James: Wow! Well, tell us about the song you're going to sing.

Steven: Well, I've written a lot of them over the years but a lot of people have asked me over the years, "What's your favorite song?" That's a common question. I really can't answer that

because they come from all the different little moments and chapters. My family and my precious bride, Mary Beth, who by the grace of God, we're 32 years and going strong.

But there is one song that I've always said well, I'll put it like this. If I had just enough breath left in my lungs, if I was told, okay you can sing one more song. Of all the ones you've written, what would it be? It's a song immediately I could answer that with a song that I wrote, it was on my very first album interestingly enough, and it's just carried all through the years that just simply says: My redeemer is faithful and true.

James: Y'all want to hear him sing that about the faithful and true?

Singing:

As I look back on this road I've travelled
I see so many times He's carried me through
And if there's one thing that I've learned in my life
My redeemer is faithful and true

My redeemer is faithful and true
And everything He has said He will do
And every morning His mercies are new
My redeemer is faithful and true

My heart rejoices when I read the promise
That there's a place that I'm preparing for you
I know some day I'll see my Lord face to face
'Cause my redeemer is faithful and true

My redeemer is faithful and true
And everything He has said He will do
And every morning His mercies are new

My redeemer is faithful and true

And in every situation

He has proved His love for me

When I lack the understanding

He gives me more grace to me

My redeemer is faithful and true

And everything He has said He will do

And every morning His mercies are new

My redeemer is faithful and true

Jesus is faithful and true

[Cheers & Applause]

James: How true. Absolute truth! I think that this is just phenomenal. Your story is. What do you want to happen? If you could say a simple thing, people get the book, and you can get it online, you can get it in the bookstores now -- go get it -- what do you hope happens as they journey with you?

Steven: Well, my life has been marked -- my life of faith has been marked in so many ways by the stories of followers of Jesus, scripture throughout and I'm so thankful that God didn't edit out the messy parts and the ugly parts, the man after God's own heart, David that's a scoundrel -- you read through the story and there's so much hope in that and I'm so thankful God didn't -- well, we're going to edit out those parts so you only get to see the glowing moments.

My hope in sharing this story, because I wrestled a lot with it because I would think, well, how would I want to invite people into this and ask them to take the time to sit down and read this if I'm just going to tell them some stories? Why would I ask somebody to take that journey? It's

because step after step God has proven that he is a God who is for and with me. I wouldn't be sitting here having this conversation, there is no way I could sing that song were it not for the grace of God -- every breath, every step.

And hopefully, by taking that journey, sharing those amazing mountains beyond anything I ever imagined, that God does more than we ask or imagine. How does a kid from Paducah, Kentucky get to play on the stage at Carnegie hall -- besides practice, practice, practice, like the joke goes. But by the grace of God.

But then to walk through the darkest valleys and to be able to tell here's how God carried me and carried my family and I. This is the only reason I could share this story. My hope is that those watching will read it will find themselves in those pages and say, "If God is faithful in that part of his story, then God can be faithful in this chapter of my story."

James: You want to say thanks to God for the way he's worked through Steven. Thanks for blessing us.

[Applause]

You really have blessed us. Steven, we're going to do something that blesses people beyond words. I don't hesitate to ask you to help. Let me show you what your availability to God to become a miracle in somebody's life -- you never thought you could be like a New Testament miracle. You can be. You can be the answer to many mothers' prayer and heart cry. You can be the answer to children having a life they never imagined. Watch.

Transition roll-in:

Announcement: We would like to inform that in order to save and use properly the little water that we have, we would like to ask you to not come with more than three buckets. Signed: The Chief responsible of this water.

Announcer: It's a list of rules. Rules meant to preserve this, the only source of water for the many families living here.

[Open captions]

>> It's so little water. It's not enough for all of us, so we have to ration it.

Announcer: As desperate a challenge as this scarcity is, it's only where their struggles begin.

[Open captions]

>> The water is very dangerous. There are many parasites which make us very sick.

Announcer: It's absolutely mind-boggling that anyone could survive long after drinking this disease and parasite infested water. The sad truth is many here don't. Most of them, young children, little bodies unable to defend themselves against such a contaminated source.

[Open Captions]

>> My children died from drinking the water.

>> My child got very sick and passed away.

>> I'm scared my remaining children will also die.

Announcer: With your help we could drill a well right here. Abundant, clean, life giving water. No more thirst and dehydration. No more sickness.

Studio appeal: (From 3/6/17)

James: We've drilled, with your help, thousands of wells. The wells still average \$4800. Can you give a well? So we're asking God, God raise up people who are able to drill a well and they'll take joy in doing it. Raise up people who will give \$1200 and then pray, "God give us three more to join me" -- \$2400 and pray one will.

But here's what I want you to understand: \$48, Betty, has been the main gift that comes in to drill wells. And then a gift of \$144, which drills water wells to take care of ten people for \$48 -- \$144, 30.

So there is a level at which everyone watching can participate. And you can be the answer to a mother's prayer, her heart cry, to a healthy future for her children. Right now go on the website, take your bankcard, use it like a check. You should always use them that way. Or you can dial the number. Many people are calling in right now to pray. While they're calling, you can call and be an answer to prayer. Here's the gift and tell us what you're putting in the mail. If you write a check, make it to LIFE but let us know. Call and use your bankcard, go on the website and use it. If you mail a check, tell us what you're sending. We have some gifts for you that I believe will be a tremendous blessing to you. Please now, make that call, make that gift.

SWFL Cause 2025:

A: 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 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 Prayers for My Physical Health, a Bible-based collection of 52 prayers designed to bring strength, healing, and renewal to every area of your body. Covering a wide range of physical needs, this beautifully crafted book encourages intimate conversations with God.

With a gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "Armor of God" tumbler set. These two 20-ounce stainless steel tumblers, each inscribed with Ephesians 6:11 are a practical and meaningful way to carry a reminder of God's strength and protection throughout your day.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

Field appeal:

JOHN: So our friend, the village chief has brought me to the well that they're using here in the community. You can see the amount of effort that it actually took to hand dig this well. They said that it is about 60 ft deep. If someone falls into this well, which one of his sons, that happened while they were digging the well. There's no getting out. As marvelous of a work as it is, you'd think of the ingenuity and the effort that's put into this situation, the water that's there because it's not deep enough and because it's not sealed, becomes contaminated. This is the water that this community drinks from. It's the only water source within two-and-a-half hours. And it hurts their children. It takes their lives.

I'm so impressed with their effort. I love the ingenuity of the African people. They're the hardest working people you're ever going to find, and yet they need our help. They need our help to drill this well. So I'm asking you, please help us. Please help me tell them a well is on the way. Go right now. Get on the phone, get on the internet, and make the very best gift that you can possibly make. Help us give life through Water for Life.

Studio good-bye:

James: It is a sure joy to hold this up, this amazing story. Steven, both of our journeys have inspired other people to begin to live amazed. That's when Jesus sent another of the same kind, you can all live amazed. "You can be full of me. The one you've had here in the body now lives in you." You have no idea what God can do with you. This story -- by the way, and this is big. This is a big book. I don't think your publisher's giving it away.

[Laughter]

Why don't you encourage your friends to go get one online or in the bookstores; will you? Join me saying thanks to God for Steven Curtis.