



Special Guest Chad Robichaux is a former Force Recon Marine and a Department of Defense (DoD) Contractor who had eight deployments to Afghanistan as part of a Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) Task Force. After overcoming his personal battles with PTSD and nearly becoming a veteran suicide statistic, Chad founded the MIGHTY OAKS FOUNDATION, a non-profit that serves the active duty, military veteran, and first-responder communities around the world with highly-successful, faith-based, combat trauma and resiliency programs. He has spoken to over 275,000 active-duty troops and has led life-saving programs for over 4,000 active military members and veterans at four Mighty Oaks Foundation ranches around the nation. Chad has become a go-to resource and is considered to be an expert on faith-based solutions to PTSD, advising a former Presidential Administration, Congress, the Veterans Administration, and the DoD. He was also appointed to serve as the Chairman of a White House Veterans Coalition. On this Veterans Day weekend and the 249th birthday of the United States Marine Corps, Chad shares about the transformation God brought to his life.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. — Jeremiah 29:11

Chad shared a portion of his God-story and focused on a military warzone life-and-death circumstance termed, "being stuck on the X—the ambush kill zone." He clarified the Marine training rules regarding "getting off the X":

1. You cannot be naïve. You must be able to recognize that you are in danger and "on the X."
2. You have to "get off the X." But there is a correct way and a wrong way to do so.
 - a. Running means death.
 - b. Stopping means captivity.
 - c. The only choice is to turn and fight.

***When you find yourself in a dangerous place, the goal is to "get off the X" by making the right decisions. Use this metaphor to share a time in your life where you had to make a critical decision and "get off the X."**

Chad said, *"If you'd asked me at that time if I was a Christian, I would've said yes, but my faith was so paper thin, it couldn't withstand the pressures of Afghanistan. I felt I had to choose between being a warrior and Christianity. Can I be a warrior and do this job that I'm called to do? Can I do that and be a Christian? I felt like the two couldn't coexist. And there's no greater lie of the enemy than that. In fact, from my perspective of my life in combat, there are no stronger people in the planet in combating in life than men [and women] of God. We are created to be warriors! But as a very immature Christian, I chose to take my faith and put it on a shelf, and figured I could do that later. I thought, 'Right now, I must be a warrior,' and because I made the deliberate choice to do that, I believe that I left a giant hole inside of my heart that, over the following years, I filled with hate, and rage, and anger, and bitterness, and a real darkness took over me."*

***What are some character traits of someone who you would describe as both a warrior and a person of faith?**

Chad also told a story he said he was ashamed to share. *"I was home for my daughter's birthday, and she decided she didn't like the icing on her cake. I flipped out, grabbed the handful of my little girl's birthday cake and threw it against the wall and destroyed my little girl's birthday. I remember in that moment thinking, 'Who behaves that way? What kind of dad behaves that way?' This is one example of the kind of behavior I had. But when I did behave that way, I would justify it because I contrasted my world experience to theirs and wondered, 'How was she complaining? How could she complain about the icing on her cake when some little girl in Afghanistan will never have a cake her whole life, and the only thing she's worried about is not getting raped every day—from*

nine-years-old up, being sexually enslaved. And you are worried about a birthday cake?’ So, I would justify it and just be so hard on my family and my daughter. It became such a problem that, instead of dealing with that behavior, I just distanced myself from my family.”

***Discuss a time when you responded inappropriately to a situation. How did you justify your response? What did you do to make amends?**

Chad shared he was no longer active duty when the U.S. withdrew in a shameful manner from Afghanistan. He gathered some of his friends to go help his friend, Aziz, and others. He said, *“Since then, a lot of people have asked, ‘How’d you do this? How’d you pull this off?’ And there’s no explanation for it. I’m not smart enough. I’m not logistically capable enough. I’m not networked enough to pull it off. God orchestrated an absolute modern-day miracle that resulted in a rescue of 17,000 people, which is the largest civilian evacuation.”*

***Have you ever experienced a God-orchestrated miracle? How did it change your faith?**

Chad then shared about returning home after his eighth deployment. He had lost fifteen friends and had been operation compromised, abducted by foreign intelligence agency, and lived through many other horrific events. He was diagnosed with PTSD and was dealing with debilitating panic attacks. He felt like a failure. He was ashamed and embarrassed. He was “on the X” again and didn’t realize it. Because of that, he didn’t “step off the X” and chose to stay there for a period of almost three years, nearly costing him everything. He almost lost his marriage, his family, and his life. Thanks to God’s mercy and Chad’s praying wife, Kathy, he decided to get back into the fight—“get off the X”—and make right choices. He gave his life to the Lord and began to find restoration, hope, and purpose. He also realized a vital training manual was available to him in the form of the Bible.

***Describe a time when you found yourself stuck in a toxic situation or mindset. What happened? What steps did you take to correct it?**

Chad ends by reminding us of the point in time he almost took his own life. He made the choice to “step off the X” and into the life God created him to live: *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).* Chad emphatically said, *“God didn’t just create us, guys. He created us with a plan and purpose for our lives.”* He warned us that we’re going to find ourselves “on the X,” but when we do, if we will trust God’s promise from Jeremiah 29:11, we’re going to land in the right place. That was his closing prayer for us all: *“I pray for every person who is “on their X”—You know them and You know their hearts. Give them the strength and courage to make the right choice and step forward into the life You created them to live. In Jesus’ name, amen.”*

***Chad quoted Mark Twain, who said there were two important events in your life: the day you were born, and the day when you figured out why. Share the “why” in your life.**

PRAYER: Veterans Day

Heavenly Father, thank You for the men and women who serve our country and for the sacrifices they and their families have made so we might live in comfort and convenience. Lord, we ask for Your blessings in their lives. Thank You for the generations before us who had the courage to stand for freedom. May that be true of this generation. Thank You that You looked upon our nation this past week with mercy. We pray for those who have been elected—regardless of party or office—to stand for righteousness and godliness. May Your people continue to be awakened from our slumber and be willing to stand for Your truth in the arenas where you’ve given us influence. Help us turn away from compromise, embrace godliness, and use our voices to stand on behalf of those who are on the front lines. May we not take the mercy You have shown us for granted. Thank You for the men and women who stand for your people throughout the earth. May you be pleased with our responses. We praise You for Your faithfulness. In the name of Jesus, amen.