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Author Lee Strobel speaks at convocation

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Lee Strobel, a leading apologist and bestselling author of 20 books, including the popular “The Case for Christ,” talked to Liberty University students about the “unexpected adventure” of a Christian at Monday’s convocation service in the Vines Center.

Strobel’s “unexpected adventure” is about performing evangelism on a personal level and taking advantage of the everyday opportunities to witness.

“You never know what’s going to happen ... on what starts to be an average, routine day how God might bring an opportunity in your life to have an eternal impact on another human being,” he said.

Strobel, who was an atheist until (as a journalist) he investigated the evidence for Christ, was convinced and surrendered his life to Him. He told stories about some of his chance encounters as a Christian that ended up being evangelism opportunities. He outlined three things that, “If Jesus physically lived in my house, what he would do” to engage in an “unexpected adventure.” They included: 1) prayer for our neighbors, 2) letting everybody know the door is open for questions and being able to dialog with non-believers and defend our faith and 3) being authentic in the way we relate to others, with our actions backing up our words.

With a voice full of emotion, he ended his talk by reading a poem written by a 24-year-old woman who accepted Christ after being invited to a discussion group for non-believers at his church. The poem began with: “Do you understand that you represent Jesus to me? Do you know, do you understand that when you treat me with gentleness, that it raises the question in my mind that maybe He is gentle too?”

Strobel told LU students that the girl “is probably no different than the people who live in your neighborhood, the people who you’re going to encounter in the workplace as you go out from Liberty University.” He challenged them to take full advantage of everyday opportunities to witness.

Strobel's talk at Liberty is part of his newest project, a book titled "The Unexpected Adventure" that he plans to release in February 2009.

Strobel arrived at Liberty fresh off a national book tour for "The Case for a Real Jesus," released in September 2007.

"My new book, "The Case for the Real Jesus," is what I'm most excited about because it answers the kind of questions a lot of students will hear or read about on the Internet or get from their friends," he said. "Like you hear 'Christians have just borrowed all this stuff about Jesus from ancient mythology' ... What bologna — but where's the evidence? So I interviewed a leading historian ... and he just absolutely devastates that argument. So I try to deal with the issues that are currently circulating in popular culture."

For this book, he traveled 24,000 miles to interview experts and scholars on "the biggest objections to Christianity that are being raised by atheists and on Web sites and so forth."

One of those scholars was Liberty graduate Mike Licona, who was interviewed about current objections to the resurrection and about Islam's views on the subject. (Licona co-authored a book with LU professor Dr. Gary Habermas called "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus.")

Strobel had been to LU once before, in 1997 when he interviewed Habermas for "The Case for Christ."

Strobel's interviewing skills made him a leading journalist at the Chicago Tribune and other newspapers for 14 years, even earning him Illinois' top honors for investigative reporting (which he shared with a team he led). But his best investigative work, as he sees it, is his own investigation into the evidence for Christ when he was a professed atheist.

Strobel, who holds a law degree from Yale, studied the evidence for two years and in 1981 received Christ and entered the ministry, joining the staff of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., and later becoming a teaching pastor at Rick Warren's Saddleback Valley Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif. For two seasons, Lee was executive producer and host of the weekly national network TV show "Faith Under Fire." He is currently writing full time in Southern California.

— To learn more about Strobel's testimony and his books, go to www.leestrobel.com.

— For more about LU alumnus Mike Licona's ministry, visit www.risen-jesus.com.

— To read about the published works of LU professor Dr. Gary Habermas, go to <http://www.garyhabermas.com>