

8/4/15
Week 32 WFL
Shauna Niequist
Book: *Savor*

James: Thank you! Thank you very, very much. You're gracious. Thanks for the warm welcome! And welcome to *LIFE Today*.

I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have Shauna Niequist with us. This is Lynne and Bill Hybels' daughter. We used to have Billy Graham's children on a lot. We had Franklin, and we had Ruth, and had Anne Graham Lotz; and the girls, especially always reminded us, we're not just Billy Graham's daughter, we're Ruth Graham's daughter too.

Really, Shauna was going to have mom here, Lynne was going to be here but they had a loss in the family and mom really needed to be close to someone that really needed that close comfort. But she was actually, because she is part of the inspiration for *Savor*: Living abundantly where you are as you are. That's not just wishful thinking, it's a very real possibility in Christ; as a matter of fact, it is a promise. Mom had a lot to do with it. But she understandably is there being a comfort.

And Shauna is here to tell you why God inspired her to put this incredible book together. It's just unique. It's actually, the cover is like the towel that hangs in her kitchen, she said. It's like she had a picture of it. But it's really interesting and it is 365 devotions.

Would you welcome Shauna to *LIFE Today*?

Glad to see you.

Shauna: Thank you!

James: Bill, we think of you and praise God for you and Willow Creek Church. We love you. Thank you for helping so many pastors.

One of the great messages you delivered years ago was that we can't always have a rapid charge on our batteries, we need a trickle charge. I almost found that out too late because I burned out.

I could have just had my life destroyed and you were finding that out and you tried to help a lot of preachers. Thank you for that. You've done so much to help others. Bill, we love you!

Lynne, we miss you and may God comfort you and the family.

Shauna, I wanted to ask you, if you would, because we've just mentioned mom and she was going to come because she is so much a part of your life but also, really a part of, I think what you want to communicate here. Tell us what your mom's gone through that really made an impact on you.

Shauna: She would say that she grew up in an environment where the one rule for women, for little girls, for teenagers, for grown women was to be nice -- just be nice all the time. Don't pay attention to your feelings, don't pay attention to your dreams, don't pay attention to this greater sense of the world around you -- just be nice.

Then she became a pastor's wife, and the messaging for pastors' wives for many of them is very clear -- just keep being nice.

[Laughter]

She was nice and nice and nice and nice, and then she realized she was very, very depressed, and she was very far from the person that God created her to be. She was nice but she was not alive in a deep way.

So when she was 40, she started this process; a spiritual process, an emotional process, a relational process, kind of reconnecting to the passion that God put inside of her, to the core relationships in her life. She sort of allowed God to rebuild her life, and along that way kind of found a new calling and it is largely peacemaking and global advocacy.

So when she started that process she was 40 and I was 15. So I got to see, I got front row seat to watch a nice disconnected woman become a woman fully alive, a woman using her gifts, a woman living out of her passions. And to get to see both of those things gave me a very clear sense of which one I want. So her example to me, being brave enough to walk that very difficult journey made me really want to live that legacy that she gave me.

James: It didn't mean we'd not be nice and just get on with something else, it just meant you weren't going to be regimented by what people might expect or what people thought was proper, but you actually were going to find the place of divine design and destiny and purpose like you saw your mother because you evidently saw a woman go from a point of perhaps even visible darkness into suddenly a brightness; am I right about that? And you decided you want

to live in that light. I don't want to live in that pretense or that failed effort that is not doing anything for the person that's trying to do everything right.

Shauna: And she'll say sometimes, "Oh, Shauna. Shauna is not nice at all." I'm nice! And what she means is, harmless, innocuous, pretending, image-oriented; that's what she means. So yeah, she is not nearly as nice now but she is really brave -- she is really making a difference. She is deeply kind. She is courageous. I think she has aspired to something so much more beautiful.

Betty: Don't you think that happens to a lot of women? That they get lost in all those expectations of what they think they should be or that people put on them or the church can put on them. It's kind of like a cookie cutter style and they forget who they are.

Shauna: Totally. So she stepped into a pastor's wife role and there were certain expectations that went along with that but the more honest she was with herself, to say God didn't make me necessarily to be a typical pastor's wife. She loves international travel to serve the poorest of the poor, to be a voice for the voiceless. We joke about it that like my mom goes to war zones the way the rest of us go to Target. It's her thing and she loves it.

James: And she likes it better than you do Target.

Shauna: Absolutely! She would much rather.

James: And she is the target!

[Laughter]

It's going to get worse that way too but she is not afraid? Because Christians are really being targeted.

Shauna: She was just in Iraq meeting with an amazing organization there. People ask all the time, "Are you scared?" I say I believe so deeply what God is doing through her that I'm not afraid for her. I see her so deeply connected to how he created her. It is a very beautiful thing. So we release her. We pray a lot and we release her into this ministry because we believe she is really making a difference.

James: What profound affect did it have on you? Because obviously it did. And probably, this book is a little bit of how it took place?

Shauna: I think what I saw is when a person, man or woman lives deeply connected to what God's called them to, that light, that kind of word you were using, that sense of spirit and life is something I want. So she has been such an encourager to me. What is it that God planted inside of you? What do you want to do? How can we help? How can we as a family surround you and support you?

James: You write a pretty lengthy, pretty strong blog. How do they find you? If our viewers want to know where do we go and read what Shauna is writing?

Shauna: It's ShaunaNiequist.com.

James: There it is on the screen if you can spell all of that okay. She's right there. I'm going to read one -- these are devotions and then she has recipes scattered. About how frequently are the recipes?

Shauna: About every two weeks, chronologically.

James: Why do you do that? Why do you put a recipe in here? Do you think people are just getting so fired up? Or they're beginning to think well, am I ever going to be all I need to be so I need to go eat? What's the deal?

Shauna: When they first came to me to ask me about a devotional I shied away from it a little bit only because I really believe that we don't experience the fullness of spiritual life just alone with a journal, with a Bible, with God. So much of spiritual life happens in conversation, around the table, listening to each other, praying for each other. I never wanted to inadvertently communicate that this is spiritual life right here in this book.

So the recipes are sort of a way of saying, close the book, open your front door, gather your people around the table so if you've been reading through and you get to a page where there is a recipe and you realize, wait a minute, it's been a long time since I've stopped everything and gathered the people I love around my table. They're sort of like a little alarm clock all the way through the book to remind us to live that way.

James: Listen to one of the little daily thoughts in here. I'm just going to let it come from what she said because this is something that she went through and now then she is talking about it.

Listen to it: Today all I can think about is what might have been. Today would have been my due date had my pregnancy been a healthy one. Some day we might have another child but we'll never have a child born on January 31st, 2009. That baby will never be. And it seems

worth stopping for today just for a moment. Of course, I knew women who had miscarried but when it happens to you it is like waking up to a conversation you've heard before and only now grasp. And you realize what they were trying to find the words to describe.

It was deeply moving to me that my body nurtured and nourished Henry, delivering him safely into the world. And this miscarriage has forced me to ask some questions. Did my body fail me? Did I somehow fail it? We've had a tenuous relationship in the past, my body and I; was this a breach of trust?

On most days it's all right. I understand that God is sovereign, that bodies are fragile and fallible, that grief mellows over time and that guarantees aren't a part of human life. But on this day, I'm crying just a little for what might have been.

I think, Shauna, that sometimes sharing our hurt, not only potentially heals others but it helps heal us. I felt like that's what I was hearing here.

Shauna: In my experience the nature of grief or pain is inherently isolating. You always feel like you're the only one.

When you're in a season of great joy, you're like, "I'm happy, you're happy! Good things everywhere!"

But when your heart is broken all you can see is that everyone else has everything they need. It's so moving, I think -- I think God does some of his best work in us when we let people in to what feels so lonely and so heavy.

So I hate that miscarriage and infertility is part of our history. I hate that that will always be part of our story. And at the same time, what God has done connecting us with other families who have carried the same kind of grief has been really extraordinary and very moving.

Betty: And it is important that we are able to share our hurts, our joys, our pain, whatever is going on in our life because you never know how it might affect or touch some other person that really needed to hear your story because it related to their story. Because so many times like you said, when you're in that circumstance, and even as James read in that passage there that you feel so alone, like no one has gone through something exactly like I have.

Of course, we know that God is with us in the midst but he also puts people in our lives, part of his body to share with us and to encourage us. So it is very, very important; somebody to weep with us, somebody to laugh with us and experience the experiences that we're having.

James: I'd like to just say to maybe here in the studio audience and at home that I really don't know where you are but I really feel like there's someone today whose heart has just been kind of ripped open, and maybe something similar.

Betty and I passed by a cemetery that's not too far to where we live and Betty pointed over there and said, "Little Matthew is out there."

Who is little Matthew? Matthew was our oldest daughter Rhonda's little baby that was stillborn around Christmas. And I think you know we lost our youngest daughter a couple years ago around Christmas.

But this was little Matthew and little Matthew was five months or so. He was just a perfectly formed little guy. You could hold him in your hand. Put him in a little wicker basket and had a little service. And Rhonda said, with Betty there and looking at little Matthew said, "I didn't know you very long but I sure did love you."

And you know a lot of times you think they probably wouldn't understand our heartache, her heartache -- wouldn't understand mine, but we do. And I think with the healing that we trust God for through whatever we go, whatever journey, whatever challenge, whatever mountain or valley, one of the hopes is that we can help you find that healing and that comfort that Jesus came to give who is the only one who can give it adequately.

Doesn't mean all the hurt goes away. It just means boy, do you have a shepherd that if he's got 99 safe in the fold he's still out looking for the one that is wandering, wondering where is everybody? Where is somebody that cares? Jesus says, "Oh, if you only knew how much I cared. If you only knew how much I want to take you into the shelter and the shadow of my presence." And that's what he wants for you.

I want to tell you, this is why Shauna wrote all of this. It is why she was open and honest. That's why her mom would talk about her challenges. It's why she is comforting family members right now because someone is having some dementia and they've lost a family member and they need help. This is what we do for one another. This is why we're here. Shauna, I think that you know we want to help you do what God's called you to do; that's a calling on our life.

Your web site, we'll put it up there on the screen again so you can help people. I think all of you who are watching, I just really need you to hear this. We give people food and water and shoes and shelter but we're here on *LIFE Today* for you. You are the thirsty person, the hurting person, the lonely person that God wants to reach out and I'm telling you, do what nobody can do, like the shepherd, like Jesus, and that is hold you close. Shauna, I believe, that's the whole

reason for your devotions. We can get so close to God that we not only know he knows our heart but we can get to know his heart. And isn't that a wonderful thing when we reach that place that we become one with his heart?

Shauna: Part of the reason that after several conversations this seemed like a good idea to me was because I went through a season of my life where I needed something. I needed my life to feel more connected, connected to God, connected to people around me.

And one of the things I started to do, I grew up doing daily devotionals and then for whatever reason I'd stopped, kids get up early, and life was busy but I began again and I found that what God did in my heart, if I started the day connected with him, connected to his unconditional love, to his heart for me, there was a quality that stayed with me throughout the whole rest of my day that I couldn't recapture if I did it at the end.

That's how I want to live. I want to start with that sense of connection that God made me on purpose and for a purpose. There's nothing I can do today to earn more love, there's nothing I can do today to ruin his love for me. When you start in that place you're very free throughout your day to connect with other people, to serve, to laugh, but beginning with that connection for me has been a very important practice the last couple of years.

James: Don't you appreciate Shauna sharing? Don't you appreciate her going to the diligent effort and love to try to take you into the presence of the Lord?

Father, I pray for, I know several, maybe many, many who just knew they needed their broken heart healed, they needed to be held. I sense you're doing that. May they draw near you and you will draw near them, comfort; in Jesus' name.

If you ever need anybody to pray with you that line is there for you because we love you. The book that we're talking about *Savor: Living abundantly where you are as you are*, it's in the bookstores. You can easily get it. If you would like to help us give someone water for a thirsty life, water for their life, we'll tell them about the water of life because we'll show them what that water does. We'll be glad to send it to you, just ask for it.

I want you to look. Shauna, we love to show our viewers what love can do. When there's a need that we can meet, it is a joy to do it. It's like we become the hands of Jesus and he also said if you do it to the overlooked, the least, the least noticed you've done it to me.

One thing Jesus asked for, evil sinful humanity did not give it to him, he said when he was dying, "I thirst!" First time I heard that as a teenager I said, "I would have liked to have given you water. I would not have given you vinegar and gall." You know, for millions of people,

Betty, a little teenage boy, we've been able to give water to millions because you would give water. I want you to watch closely and then let's give Jesus water. Let's do it.

On the mission field

Ralph: Today is a great day of celebration at *LIFE Outreach*. The water is coming up. The kids are cheering. We were just able to drill in this village today. For about three days they've been drilling; they finally struck water. I'd say within somewhere about half an hour that water will be just as clear as it can be coming out of somebody's faucet back home.

Announcer: This water well will transform the lives of these children and their families forever. Yet thousands of miles away these children are not so fortunate.

Announcer: This child is one of the nearly 800 million people who lack access to clean drinking water. And if that doesn't change he can become one of the children who die every year from having to drink unclean water. But there is hope for this child and others like him around the world. For such a devastating problem, a clean water well offers a profoundly simple solution -- and a promise for a better, brighter future.

Ralph: So please go to your phones, go to the web site, whatever is the most convenient and give that generous gift today because it is through the generosity of people's giving that lives here can be changed forever. You will provide clean drinking water that they so desperately need. God bless!

End of clip

In the studio

James: And it is our joy to do that. Isn't it, Betty? When you see that, what happens when you have seen the situation where it's just so filthy and miserable and then all of the sudden you see that water come up and the joy?

Betty: Of course, I love to see the scenes like we just saw where they're jumping up and down in the water. That's real joy -- that's real show of happiness on the part of these precious children. They know what it means if they can avoid getting the sicknesses they can get from diseased water. You saw the filthy water but yet what else are they going to do?

And as we watched the joy of these children we must remember there are some that are where they were. They need our help. They're not jumping up and down with joy. They're crying,

they're sick, and their parents are watching them die because they don't have the fresh water. We can do something about that. I hope you'll join us.

James: I'm confident that you will. You have been the most amazing people. As a matter of fact, I think if you watch *LIFE Today* you know, okay, James and Betty are going to ask us to help and it would be so easy just to change the channel and go do something else. The very fact that you're sitting here right now to me says I'm interested. I want to believe it says I care and I want to believe that you're saying if I can help I will.

So here's what we're asking you to do. We only have got a few more days now to get enough of the support to drill 500 wells in more than a dozen nations. Could you drill a well? Would you do it? They're \$4800.

Many people say, "I make that a goal every year and I've been able to do it. What joy!" Can you do it?

Some say, "I can't do that but I can help."

There are many people who give \$1200 and pray for three to join them.

Some will give \$2400 and say, "Lord, get one other to come and we've got another well."

But most of the support comes from gifts of \$48, which gives ten people water, that's how it breaks out, basically the rest of their life -- \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life.

So at what level can you help? But whatever you can do, Jesus said of the widow's mite that was the greatest gift of all because it was what she could do. What can you do? What will you do?

You can go to LifeToday.org, take your bankcard, use it like a check and make the best gift you can. Would you do that? Do it right now please. You'll be going online for one of the best reasons. Or you can dial the telephone number there on the screen. Take your bankcard and tell our prayer partner when they answer, "I want to make a gift to give that great gift of water, a gift of love." Then make the gift that God puts on your heart.

We have some gifts to send you: A beautiful daily devotional that will bless you so much. We have the "Names of Jesus" pens. A Thomas Kinkade beautiful canvas painting that's about this large, it's hanging in the studio. It's beautiful! We'll send it to you to say thank you for your gift. So we want to express love and appreciation to you by the great gift that you're giving

others, a cup of water, a well of water in Jesus' name. Thank you for doing that! Thank you for making that gift.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice: drink filthy, polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is there is a solution! *Mission Water for Life* is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today we can establish and drill 500 water wells for remote villages in over 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10 people; \$72 will impact 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh, clean, disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift you'll receive the "Every Day a New Day" devotional broken out into the four seasons of the year. This daily devotional features scriptures, inspirational thoughts, a Bible reading plan, and a place for you to journal each day.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request "The Names of Jesus" pen set; one inscribed with the names of Jesus found in scripture and the other reflecting the gifts of the spirit.

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 this beautifully framed canvas print of "The Forest Chapel" by Thomas Kinkade.

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

End of clip

On the mission field

Betty: As I stand here as a mother, and I stand next to this mother with her precious baby that means so much to her, we can make a difference. This baby is going to get

help because he got to the clinic, but so many times they don't. There is not a clinic for them to go to.

But we can help; we can give them fresh water, and by doing that, by drilling the wells and you can be a part of that. Wouldn't that be wonderful to know that you were a part of saving the life of an infant that all he needed was good clean water?

Would you help us do that? I feel like you will. God bless you and thank you!

End of clip

In the studio

James: If you'd like to have Shauna's book *Savor*, and this also is a devotional, we have an opportunity to really just keep you in the presence of the Lord for a year and it will be a beautiful gift. If you'd like to have it, you help us give water and just say, "Would you mind sending me that? I think it would really help me."

We'd be glad to do it because that's why we're here. We're not just here for children to live, we're here for you and for your family.

We want to thank you for sharing this time with us. Would you join our studio audience thanking Shauna for being here?

Shauna, thank you. Tell mom and dad, "Hi!" We really love them and Willow Creek.

Thank all of you for watching *LIFE Today*. Thank you for sharing.

I hope you'll visit the stream every day -- the stream -- stream.org! God bless you. Thank all of you for being here.

Announcer: Be sure to visit stream.org, a rich and lively source for breaking news, analysis, and entertainment! Stream.org