

7/11/16
Week 29: Mission Feeding
Sheila Walsh
Dorothy Newton

Sheila: Hello! And welcome to *LIFE Today*! My name is Sheila Walsh. James and Betty aren't with us today but I believe we're going to have a really amazing program.

Let me read you some disturbing statistics. Now this is just from the 2012 N.F.L. season: 21 of the 32 football teams had at least one player with a domestic violence or sexual assault charge on his record.

It's really horrifying. As you get to know me a little bit I'm a huge football fan; not just N.F.L. but college football. But the disturbing level of violence that takes place in professional sport is something that we, as a church has got to address because there are so many who suffer in silence.

My guest today knows more than any woman should about that. Her book is actually called *Silent Cry*: The true story of abuse and betrayal of an N.F.L. wife. Would you please welcome my beautiful guest, Dorothy Newton?

Dorothy: Thank you!

Sheila: It's so great to have you here. I've been looking forward to this because it's really clear in my mind that God has always intended our paths to cross because we have an unusual history of kind of bumping into each other.

Dorothy: Yes! And if you will allow me I would like to tell briefly the story. But in 2009 God spoke and said -- I knew I was supposed to write the book but I did not want to hear that I'm supposed to write this kind of book. So what happened was you were advertising a TV special with Thomas Nelson, When a Woman Trusts God. So I thought, okay, if I just write my story just briefly just so I can meet Sheila Walsh, that will take care of God's request to write a book.

[Laughter]

So that was in March of 2010. I was not selected but only God would put us together for such a time as this. He is truly amazing.

Sheila: But I remember the first time I actually met you. It was at the end of a Christmas production at my church at Prestonwood. I remember looking into your eyes and you know, I get to meet a lot of people but I remember saying to my husband that night, "I could tell two things about this woman. She has been through a lot and grace rests in her eyes."

There was such a combination of pain and power that was just -- it made me think, I want to get to know this woman. So take us back a little bit, Dorothy. Take us back to your childhood. What was that like for you growing up?

Dorothy: Growing up as a child, at the early ages of eight years old I just remember my mom, she was always abused: Verbally, emotionally, physically. My stepfather was an alcoholic and this was normal. We lived in a three bedroom trailer, six kids, parents. It was just normal; watching it all the time.

I remember watching my mom, seizures -- she would have seizures a lot. He was choking; there was just a lot of violence.

But I am the oldest girl so I always had the mothering instinct; taking care of my mom, making sure she was okay after the abuse, making sure my siblings were okay. And then just remembering constantly, continuously, rocking myself to sleep saying, "Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so." So that was as a child growing up, seeing it often.

My mom had a third grade education, the oldest of 13 children but she tried to leave. When I was in the 10th grade we left the abusive situation at home and moved away. We were homeless but she worked. Eventually, she worked three jobs to take care of us and we spent a year away before we had to finally move back. It was just too hard but she tried.

So I remember those times. But I remember her courage and her strength to just remove herself from the situation.

Sheila: You what's interesting, Dorothy because you often think if someone has seen that as a child, then there would be some kind of radar to stay away from it as you get older but it almost seems the opposite.

Dorothy: Yes! I would have never ever thought. I went off to college. I got a good education. I started a campus ministry in college leading others to Christ, loving the Lord, having the best

time. I was on a volleyball scholarship. I would have never ever thought that what I saw as a child, that I would become that victim as an adult. It seems like I was just attracted to the behavior.

In the beginning I was sharing Christ. That's all I ever knew. I always knew the Lord and so when I met my ex-husband I thought I was just going to share Christ. He had a lot of baggage, I had similar baggage. We had something in common. One thing led to another. But I compromised; I compromised my faith and who I was to everything he thought I was or who he wanted me to become.

Sheila: Were there warning signs, Dorothy early on, even in retrospect when you look back?

Dorothy: Not in the beginning. Not when we were dating. We were in love. Everything just seemed perfect. Yes, he was not perfect in all the sense of what a -- but he was a gentleman, he was kind, he was fun, easy to talk to; just a lot of great qualities. He wanted to know more about God. He loved me and that part of who I was. So that's how it started.

But one thing led to another, 26 years old, a virgin and my life changed forever, become pregnant. As a result, you can only imagine growing up as a Christian all my life, I wanted to be under God's covenant. I wanted to get married. I wanted to make it right. I felt the shame, the guilt. All those people I had studied Christ with, I mean shared the gospel with, and yet I am pregnant; 26 years old, pregnant before marriage. So we got married. We got married and it was then when I was pregnant I can see the signs but I didn't want to believe it. It was like no, it's not that bad. It's just not that bad. He's not hitting me. Then there was so many good years like before --

Sheila: He was signed to the Cowboys too. Those are the glory days which I'm believing will come again. Those were really the Cowboy's glory days! I mean three Super Bowls. And I wondered how much more difficult that made it for you when you realized things were getting a lot worse and he was becoming a lot more violent? Did you feel that you couldn't reach out for help?

Dorothy: No. There was no way I could reach out for help -- living in Texas, three Super Bowl wins. No, it was impossible to really reach out. I saw things and I saw how everybody turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to situations. No one would believe me. No one would believe me so I chose to suffer in silence.

Nate was in trouble with the law quite often, so when the good times happened, there were highs and lows. And when the lows were happening, which was way often than the highs, I

couldn't rest in the highs because I knew something would happen. And sure enough, it's like things would happen.

I would stay in the beginning because I wanted my marriage to work. I was in love. I loved my husband. But then as time went on it went from the verbal abuse to hitting things around me and then hitting me. So at that point there was no way out. There was no way that I could escape it.

Sheila: Plus you had a child.

Dorothy: Yes, I was threatened. We have two amazing boys together. So it was hard all the time. It's like in public, there was this public success and in private nothing but struggles, no one to talk to. No one to really express what was going on.

Sheila: Did anyone in your family know? Did you let anyone in your family know?

Dorothy: Even families, as much as they loved me, I didn't give them a chance. But people, friends, family, everybody was intoxicated with this prestigious lifestyle. No one, even if they saw it, they didn't want to believe it was happening.

I take full responsibility. I should have said something. I should have spoken out. I should not have cared about Nate's career. There was so many things that I should have done and I didn't do it.

Sheila: Now, I'm sorry! You are a beautiful strong woman and I believe you did what you could but you are here today and part of writing this book is that you're now turning around to other women and you're saying to them, "You don't have to go through this."

Dorothy: You're absolutely right.

Sheila: There's not one inch in your frame that should carry any shame. You are a beloved daughter of the King of kings! You are! You are, girl!

[Applause]

What would you say, though, Dorothy if somebody is watching this and it might not be a football star, although as a nation we are so enamored with charisma as opposed to character, which is a flaw in our society; what would you say to a woman who is in a situation where they think, I don't know what to do now. I can't get help.

Dorothy: I would say to them that you're not alone. God loves you more than you could ever imagine. And it doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter -- there is no condemnation for those who know Christ Jesus. Your past does not define who you are today. He will take you no matter what you've done. Today, this moment, all you have to do is say, "Lord, I believe you and I trust you." And follow him. That's what I would say.

I would encourage them to just -- if they're in an abusive relationship, get out. Call the national domestic violence hotline but don't stay. I believe in marriages. I truly, truly do. I've encouraged thousands and thousands of friends who are still married today. But I do not believe that any woman should stay in an abusive marriage or any relationship. Get out. So I would encourage them, if you don't have a relationship with God, just trust him. Just talk to him. Get to know him but don't ever feel like you have to stay.

Sheila: We're also going to have a number on our screen that you can call for prayer. If you need somebody to just stand with you right now and pray with you and agree with you, that is why we are here.

I'm even wondering, Dorothy, for family members who suspect that something like this is going on but there's a lot of secrecy, what do you do if it is someone like a daughter or a sister, what could you do to help?

Dorothy: What you can do to help is listen. Be there. Be present in those moments. Don't just have someone to just express and share their heart. Then you disappear. Being there is like no matter what time they call, no matter how often they have to talk about it over and over and over again.

And more importantly, retain confidentiality. I remember the one time that I decided that I would trust somebody. I asked her, I said, "All I need you to do is please find resources. I need a shelter." I didn't go into details but I said, "Please, you cannot tell." This is someone who I worked closely with as my ex-husband's local agent with endorsement and appearances. And she went and told someone inside the Dallas Cowboys Organization. And as a result of her not retaining confidentiality, he came home and shot at me. So it is really, really important that you don't tell.

I know it puts you in a horrible situation of just hear and hear and be a listener and not feel like you can do anything but at the end of the day, Sheila, it is my decision and I have to be the one to get out.

So I need your prayers. So I would say to a woman or anybody around an abuse victim, pray for that person. Retain confidentiality and be there. Don't just say it but truly be there because they might call in the middle of the night. Who will answer?

Ultimately, I would say have a relationship. Encourage strong positive relationships around you. Pray that God will surround you with people that can really be there.

Sheila: You know one of the things I found most fascinating because I'd read your book before because I wrote the forward to this book but I read it again just because I wanted to refresh, and I noticed something I hadn't seen before. This book is endorsed by your ex-husband. Talk to us about that.

Dorothy: Yes! He has a relationship now with God. I would say even after the divorce, troubles don't stop, prayers don't stop. He went to prison for three years. There was so many things we had to do and work through because we have two amazing sons. So it was never easy. It was hard. But you can't give up either.

So he is now a different man. He has a relationship. We are very cordial to each other. We are not best of friends; I'm not going to say that. That is certainly not the case. But I love where he is because you know what? My sons get to see their father walking in a different light. To me, even though it was the worst, the darkest days of my life and what I had to go through, if I could change it, of course I would but you know what? Today I am who I am today because of God. Nate is forgiven. My freedom came from forgiving him, and forgiving myself. So I walk in that because God is a good God and he loves me no matter what. It is because of him that I was able to press through even when I wanted to give up and take care of my kids and further my education.

Sheila: By the way, this woman -- this woman has put herself through college twice. That's such a remarkable statement to your strength of character. That's amazing, Dorothy!

Dorothy: But I do want to say to you, Sheila, because from the beginning, honestly, two things I did is I read all of your books. You were an encouragement to me, even when you didn't know it. This was many, many years and watched Christian television, Daystar. That's how I got through the darkest times as well because I didn't share.

The title of my book, *Silent Cry* is because I didn't share. I had a best friend that I shared the last five years of my marriage. Then even after that I didn't share with anybody. It wasn't until years later that I received professional counseling through my church home, Gateway. That's when I realized that God wants my tears. I hardly ever cry because I felt like I wouldn't be able

to stop; the pain was so deep and rooted in me. But it was because of him and the professional help that I am free and have been free for a long time -- by his grace!

Sheila: I'm just so grateful for the courage it took to write a book like this; to put it down on paper. I know it is always a little scary but I think that you're going to give so many other women courage. And because you had the courage to leave at the right time, I think you gave such a gift to your sons. It also shifted the dynamics so that Nate then was able to get some help so that they actually, further down the line, are able to have a relationship with their dad.

Dorothy: Yes! And now they do have a great relationship with him. I don't interfere at all. My oldest, 26 years old got a masters from the University of Texas; my youngest, 18 years old, he's a freshman year at U.T. San Antonio. They have their relationship with their father and I'm so blessed because there has been many, many years me and my boys on our knees praying for their father, praying for ourselves. But I did it with my boys. My boys had to see me to the point where in the beginning I couldn't pray, and then I could pray for their father. So they could see forgiveness in the process as well.

Sheila: One life can make a huge, huge difference. I think of your mom, third grade education and then comes Dorothy and now will come her boys. We'll wait to see the impact they will have in the world. I want you to see how you can have an impact, one life can have an impact in different parts of the world. Please watch this!

On the mission field

>> I love this continent! And the more that I travel here the more I realize that my heart is over here. So when you see the suffering of your sisters and your brothers and your people around you that your heart begins to break. It hurts to see young kids suffer so much. It breaks my heart completely in two knowing that there are so many thousands of kids all across this continent that even today maybe won't make it. They won't live another day because they don't have food. They don't have what they need to survive.

So every bowl of food that we serve, it's also a reminder that there is probably 100 times or 1,000 times more kids that don't get that bowl of food and that breaks my heart.

I'm reminded of the words that Jesus said when he said he left the 99 to fetch that one. Sometimes it feels hopeless to go about such a big mission. But if we do it together and say, "Yeah, I'm going to save one -- just one! I'll save one. If nothing else I'm going to save one little child! Just one!"

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Last week my husband and I decided we'd go see a movie. We're trying to be more responsible with our finances so we didn't buy popcorn and we didn't get sodas; we just brought water from home. When I got home I realized that we'd spent \$30 on two movie tickets.

Do you know \$30 feeds three children for three months? \$30 will feed three children for three months. \$50 will feed five children for three months. \$100 would feed ten children for three months. What we want to do in these villages is to provide food for children at school. If we even provided like a \$1,000 will help 100 children but here's what I think is fascinating. Some of you could do a little bit more. \$1400 for sponsored feeding a whole school for three months - \$1400! And for those of you who have been placed in a situation where you have been entrusted with more resources, which is such a gift because you get to give more, \$5600 will sponsor feeding for a school for a whole year! Can you imagine? Some people spend that on a suit -- on a purse. That would feed a whole school for a whole year.

The thing as I watched that story and I'm about to go back to Angola and be able to bring back fresh stories, this is not just business as usual, this is a crisis here. Can you imagine as a mom that you can't give your child one meal a day?

We can do something. I felt so strongly when I see that piece that we are the body of Christ, we are his hands and feet on this earth and all of us, every single one of us can do something. Maybe you think, \$30 is a lot. Why don't you join together with two friends and think, we could all do \$10; that would give three children food for three months. It is amazing!

Christ has left us here not just to wait to get rescued out of here. He has left us here to make a difference. That little one had no choice as to which part of the world he was born in. No more than my son had any choice but being born into a family where we're able to provide a lot for him. But I think of these moms and I think how much you long as a mother to be able to provide clean water and food for your children.

So please, would you do something? You'll see a number on your screen. Dial that number or go online, go to LifeToday.org and give your best gift possible. If all you can give is \$30, the angels will be celebrating. If you decide you can do a whole year for a school, that would be fantastic! But let's feed these children in Jesus' name.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished areas of Africa, families are suffering, facing death

by starvation and those hit the hardest are the children. Life's mission feeding program is there ready to feed and care for these children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan.

With all of our previous reserves gone and Southern Africa facing its worst drought and food shortage in years, we urgently need to replenish our food supplies to reach 400,000 children counting on us.

Your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for the next three months. Please also consider a special gift of \$1400 to help sponsor a school and help feed 140 children for three full months.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you the brand new audio series, Living Your Destiny. Hear five outstanding Bible teachers and women of faith share how to live the life God destined for you. With your gift of \$100 or more you'll also receive The Longing in Me by Sheila Walsh, and Unashamed by Christine Caine. And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more, be sure to request "Majesty," our 2016 commemorative bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or go online today and make your gift of life to help feed and care for hungry children.

End of clip

On the mission field

James: No way for me to tell you how grateful I am to see these bags of food; I'm told over 70,000 meals on this one load. Betty and I started out really helping Peter feed 10,000 children. Now we're approaching nearly a half million.

I just say thank God because I've seen so many things happen. Children that were dying are now being fed and going to school.

It's all because of the food factory. It's all because of mission feeding and mission feeding is all because of you.

I'm saying to you right here from a miracle in Africa, you are the reason for the miracle. To God be the glory but it is God's love being expressed through you and you are glorifying God by your action and by your gifts. Thank you for helping. Let's keep doing it.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. I know you're going to respond. It is just who you are. And for any gift that you send in we're going to send you this new amazing teaching series, it is called *Living Your Destiny*, with some fantastic teachers.

But if you send \$100 or more, we're also going to send you Chris Caine's brand new book, *Unashamed* and my book, *The Longing in Me*. But I also want to say, if you feel like you've been really touched by Dorothy's testimony, we will also send you -- if you ask, say, "I want the *Silent Cry*," we will send that to you as well. Because just as you give we want to bless you back. Please, will you help me thank the amazing, beautiful Dorothy Newton. Love you!

Dorothy: Thank you.

Sheila: We'll see you next time. God bless. Thanks for being with us.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In his new book, *The Stream*, James Robison charts a plan for spiritual revolution in America. *The Stream*, available now online and at retail bookstores.