

8/02/16
Week 32: Mission Feeding
Host: Sheila Walsh
Sarah Jakes Roberts

Sheila: Hello! Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh sitting in today for James and Betty Robison.

I have to tell you, we have a phenomenal studio audience. And I think probably some of them are here because of my guest.

One of the things I'm really excited about at the moment is that we have a product that we're going to make available to you, really for any gift you give us in helping feed children in Africa. But it is called *Living Your Destiny*. Have you ever thought wouldn't it be great if I could sit down with five or six women who have really walked a long way with the Lord and learnt some hard lessons and some powerful lessons along the way? We decided we would just do it for you.

So we have a series called *Living Your Destiny*. It is teaching from Beth Moore, from Lisa Bevere, from Christine Caine, myself and my guest today who has such a powerful story. I'm going to tell you in a little bit how you can get a hold of this.

But please, will you welcome my lovely guest, Sarah Jakes Roberts?

[Applause]

Welcome!

Sarah: Thank you!

Sheila: I remember the first time that I ever heard you speak. You came to be a guest at Women of Faith, I think probably in our last year. When I saw you, I thought you were just this young, very pretty, beautifully dressed girl. You seemed quite quiet and shy. And you walked up on that platform and the way that you delivered the message that God had deposited in your heart really shook us all.

So it made me wonder before we go back, was it a point? Do you remember the first time you thought, you know what? No matter what the past has been God has given me a message to share and I'm going to share it.

Sarah: To be honest, I think that every single day. Because no matter how many obstacles you overcome there's always a new giant in front of you. We're constantly challenging ourselves with the reality that the present will eventually become the past. So we have to constantly strive to make this moment our best moment no matter what's going on with the kids or our husband or whatever is going on in our personal lives, that we have an opportunity to really share Jesus in a fresh new way. So I take that seriously every chance I get.

Sheila: Well, in 2001 your dad, Bishop T.D. Jakes was on the cover of Time Magazine. I remember that edition. The minute I saw it I bought it because I thought, wow! This is a landmark, really in what God is doing in our nation. How old were you at the time?

Sarah: I was 12 years old.

Sheila: Tell us what the next year looked like for you. Because just peeking through your window it would look like everything was perfect. But you were going through some tough stuff.

Sarah: I was. I was struggling significantly with my self-esteem trying to determine where I fit in a family that often seemed bigger than myself. And at 13 years old I got pregnant, I had my son at 14 years old and from there just the shame, the fear of not being able to really have a destiny that lived up to the last name that I carry taunted and haunted me for many, many years.

But what I think is unique, if you will, about my story is also what should give some level of peace to other people because there's this misconception that if you had all the right things, if I would have had my parents, if I would have had T.D. Jakes as my father, if I wouldn't have these daddy issues or these scars then maybe life would have been different for me. But the reality is that life doesn't spare its ride on any of us. That you can be T.D. Jakes' daughter or Joe Black's daughter and you've have a cross to carry. What matters isn't what you've gone through but what you're willing to do with the results of the broken pieces that life often gives us.

Sheila: What messages did you hear in your head knowing that you were pregnant, you were about to give birth and you're 14 years old. Sarah, you're just a little girl! What did that do to you inside?

Sarah: Man, I think just to give you insight, the mindset of someone that age when they get pregnant is that I'm going to get in trouble. Without any real reality of recognizing that it's bigger than just time out or being grounded; that you're bringing a life into the world before you've even discovered what life is about yourself.

I felt so much shame. I felt dirty. I felt embarrassed. We all go through something. I think it's a little bit more challenging when you are responsible for your own issues. I think oftentimes people can be victimizing and people can make decisions that end them up in places that they never expected.

For me, I felt like because I had the power to stop this and I didn't then there must be something wrong with me. So I spent many, many years thinking less than what God says about me. I think that that's some of the things that we do when we're experiencing shame is we punish ourselves. And we think, if I beat myself up in my head -- I used to call myself all the names in the book. You're a ho! Nobody wants you. Just all of these things and I lived that until it became my reality and then I hated who I became.

I just had to make a decision that ultimately you can continue to listen to these voices of shame in your head or you can decide I'm just going to try and live on the faith that I am who God says I am; that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. In spite of what I've gone through, in spite of what my past looks like on paper, I want to believe that I'm better than the mistakes that I've made.

And the moment I lived in that consciousness I started noticing things change for me and begin to turn around.

I think what I'm most proud of, though I have book deals and I've been so blessed to be on these tours, what I'm most proud of is that I look in the mirror and I love the girl I am. The ugly truth and the beautiful things, and I'm no longer ashamed of who I am.

[Applause]

Sheila: Yes! I love that! I love that. One of the things that kind of blew me away about you, I know that you went into a marriage that was very abusive, that just tore at you further, gave you more negative messages. But when that was finally over, instead of doing what people of my generation tended to do, which was to try and crawl under the carpet and hope nobody noticed us because we've done the big unforgivable sin, you began to write. You began to blog. What led you to be so open and transparent in the midst of what was painful?

Sarah: I'm a church girl. I grew up in church and I know that it's not often very easy to vocalize why we come to church. A lot of people are faithful but they don't necessarily explain the journey that led them back to God. I wanted to save someone from going through what I went through.

I think that our symptoms are all different. Mine may have been a teen pregnancy, mine may have been low self-esteem but the reality is that we all have something. I just refused to be handcuffed by my something. If there was an opportunity to break free from it that I wouldn't let embarrassment dictate what I told other people anymore. So I made the very conscious decision to share the incredible, I called them ratchet on the women of faith tour.

[Laughter]

-- Moments of my life that you would never associate with T.D. Jakes' daughter.

But I needed people to know that this happened to me. It may have happened to someone else but that doesn't make us less than. I really wanted to empower that 13 year old girl who's rubbing her swollen belly or the 27 year old woman who is wondering if she is ever going to fully embrace who she is as a woman. I wanted to encourage them that you're not alone. Pain isolates us. When pain isolates us it creates infection. When we have infection we have these actions that demonstrate that we're hurting on the inside.

I wanted them to know that what you're experiencing is simply a symptom. If we can get rid of the disease, if we can pull that thing up from the root that you can have the life that you always dreamed of.

Sheila: That's beautiful! When I was reading that part of your story in your book it reminded me of your situation was different; mine was I ended up in a psych hospital diagnosed with clinical depression, but that doesn't have much curb appeal in the church to have mental illness.

[Laughter]

-- Curb appeal of cabbage, basically.

But the thing that I learned during that journey is that I'm not the good news, Jesus is. What a blooming relief that is! Because so often I grew up thinking I have to be good enough for God. And sometimes, it's at the worst moments that you find the greatest freedom.

Sarah: Absolutely! His strength is made perfect in our weakness but no one is willing to admit that they're weak. I think especially when you find yourself in church and you're serving

on the usher board or you're there every week -- that we think once we start going to church we've arrived and we no longer have issues or struggles. It's going to take leadership and vulnerability to constantly remove the mess that church often makes us place on and say, "I'm here because I need a savior not because I am one."

[Laughter]

Sheila: That's great! I love that. It makes me wonder, your wonderful husband and you... I mean your husband is just adorable and he just adores you. It's very clear, very sweet to watch. But I wonder how your story and your journey has impacted how you pastor?

Sarah: I think that it has made us more effective as pastors. We both have very different stories, very different backgrounds but we've lived such full lives that when people walk into our congregation at One Church in Los Angeles that we're not expecting them to be the expected end that is promised to us. We recognize that they are a work in progress. And our job as pastors is to inspire them to live up to God's potential for their lives but to also let them know that it's going to take work and it's going to take sacrifice. But there is nothing that you lose in Christ that he doesn't give back a hundredfold.

Sheila: I'm thinking of somebody watching right now and maybe they're in a situation like you were and they feel like they'll never be able to live out their destiny, will always be second best, what would you say to someone like that?

Sarah: As long as you think you're never going to get out of it, you won't. That God is in the business of transforming our minds. So you have to change the thoughts that you think of yourself.

The message that I share in the collection is called "Searching for Gold" and how we often have these times in our lives where we're still searching for gold. And I talk about the California gold rush and how by the time the last people got there that the gold had been embedded in the rocks so they had to be willing to break the rock to get to the gold.

My message is ultimately that life hardens us. It makes us feel like we are worthless sometimes, that we have no purpose. But that God has placed gold inside of us, and as long as we're willing to break away at that rock then we can discover the many treasures he's placed inside of us.

Sheila: Wow! This is powerful stuff! Is God the one that chips away or do we have to be participants in that as well?

Sarah: We must be participants in that. Faith without works is dead. I think one of the things that I can say that I struggled with in my relationship with God is vocalizing that pain, vocalizing those fears and that's what God wants. He doesn't want this image of perfection that we put on for other people. He wants our brokenness. It is attractive to him. He loves us in our most vulnerable moments. And there, when he is in that moment, that's where the power of his spirit can really transform our lives. So yeah, we've got to open up. We've got to be honest and we have to be willing to allow his work to really take hold of our lives.

Sheila: Can you imagine what the church would be like if we all actually believed that and lived like that? Because sometimes I think church is one of the least honest places. It's where you feel obliged to put on a mask.

Honestly, I discovered that when you're hiding your pain, sometimes we hide behind food or clothes or alcohol or relationships, I found the perfect place to hide which was Christian ministry because who is going to say to you, "Put that Bible down or we're going to have an intervention!" It's probably not going to happen.

[Laughter]

But God is the only one who actually knows whether we're serving out of pain or passion.

I think that you are exhibiting a new kind of leadership, Sarah, a place where people are allowed to tell the truth. I think sometimes people are afraid of that because they think then you're just giving liberty to people to just act any way at all. Is that your experience?

Sarah: Not at all. I think we have to meet people where they are. Time and time again we see Jesus in the Bible meeting people right where they are. If we rob people from their ability to be honest and to share that truth, then the power of the word loses its power because we're not able to really be honest with them. Whether it was a prostitute in the Bible or a leper, "the untouchables," that's who Jesus came for.

So I don't mind touching the untouchables. Then hopefully I can be a bridge until they're strong in Christ and then ready to go out and catch another. But each one must teach one and that's how we will change the kingdom.

Sheila: If you could go back, would you change your story?

Sarah: I wouldn't.

Sheila: I love that!

Sarah: I wouldn't. It taught me so much about myself. I think that if I went back and changed that story that I would have a different one that may be just as challenging and may have its own set of obstacles to overcome. But I love my son; he's everything to me.

Sheila: How old is your son now?

Sarah: He's 13. He's taller than me. So can you all pray that he stops growing?

[Laughter]

Sheila: I know what that's like! My son just came home from college and he was just this little boy and now he is like 6'1".

Sarah: What happened to them?

Sheila: I have no idea. I'm almost sure when he was two I made him sign something to say this would not happen but he's clearly gone against the deal.

Sarah: You should spank him!

[Laughter]

Sheila: I'm wondering how the experience of what happened to you at 13 and then becoming a mom, how has that -- because I know you have a brand new baby girl. How old is she?

Sarah: She is three months old. She is the boss of me too. I'm very tired.

Sheila: Well, you look great! But I'm wondering how your experience will change how you mother this little girl?

Sarah: Oh, goodness! It's taught me to be more sensitive. It's taught me not to put my own insecurities on her because it could be very easy as a teenaged mom to build this parenting paradigm around you not being pregnant at the age of 13. But the reality is that that would then desensitize me to the other issues she may face. So it's really made me accountable to God so that I can really guide and nurture her the way he desires, not the way I'm afraid of.

Sheila: I remember in the Dallas Women of Faith conference your mom was there and some of your sisters or aunts you had? But I remember halfway through your message looking over at your mom and watching the wonder in her eyes as she saw this strong, beautiful, godly woman on stage. We all kind of commented to each other, "Look at Sarah's mom! Look at First Lady Jakes. She's clearly been so impacted." I wondered, did it harm your relationship with your parents when things went so wrong?

Sarah: I don't think anyone imagines that their daughter will be pregnant at the age of 13 or drop out of college or waitress at a strip club or get married and divorced. Ultimately, I don't think --

Sheila: You just kind of threw a lot of that in there.

Sarah: If you just keep talking people move past it.

[Laughter]

Sheila: But that's what I love about your story, about your honesty -- that's part of your story.

Sarah: Yeah, that's me. That's my journey.

Sheila: But that's not who you are. That was never who you were.

Sarah: I think that's what my parents knew all along. So I think if you're a parent out there and you're experiencing some issues with your children, you have to remember, if you place good seed in them, regardless of what dirt is thrown on top of it, that that seed is still in there. And with the proper amount of watering and nurturing that everything you placed in them you're going to see again. I'm literally evidence. If you could have never told my parents I'd be on *LIFE Today*. I'm fancy!

[Laughter]

Sheila: You're so fancy! It's interesting, I think there is a correlation between brokenness, yielded to Christ, and a powerful anointing because you can have somebody who has had it all together and honor the Lord and it's beautiful. But when you have someone who has been to very dark places and found Christ in the midst of that, there is an extra anointing that's on your life that is beautiful to behold!

Sarah: Thank you.

Sheila: Sarah mentioned that she is part of the series with us which we're so thrilled about; it's called *Living Your Destiny*. Maybe, even if you're listening to what Sarah shared, you think, I've always thought I've blown it. I'm going to always have to settle for second best. I'll never be what I might have been. I've discovered if you still have a pulse and there is not a white chalk mark around your body, it's not too late to be the woman that God has called you to be.

We're going to offer this to you. But first, I want to show you some other people who are very desperate and looking for help. A very dear friend, Peter, has been in Angola and he brings us this fresh report that we'll talk about in a little bit. But would you first of all, would you watch this?

On the mission field

Announcer: These mothers all share something in common. But it's a connection that no one would ever want to have -- severely malnourished children.

Peter: If I was ever asked what would be the most important thing to do for children in Africa I would say feed them, for sure. Malnutrition is such a terrible disease in children. Many times people look at it as being something that comes through hunger and it surely does but what it does to a child's body is really horrific. When you look at little Paulo here, just look at his little arms. Look how thin his little arms are. Look how his skin is beginning to change color because it's losing the nutrients to the skin.

Announcer: Mothers who live in Sub-Saharan Africa are seeing their children die before their fifth birthday at an alarming rate. A rate the U.N. says is higher than any other region in the world.

Peter: This mother wants to provide for her child just like you want to provide for your children. There's no difference in her desire. The last thing on earth that she wanted was to end up in this malnutrition clinic with her little boy fighting for his life. That was not part of her desire at all. She got here because she had no food to feed her child.

There is such an easy solution to be able to turn this little boy's life around and little boys like Paulo and that's simply by giving them a meal a day, a nutritious meal a day. Don't you think you can be a part?

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: That little one is so weak he can't even cry. Could you hear that? He's trying to make a sound but there is not even enough strength or energy in his body to cry out. This is not something that happened 20-30 years ago. This is right now in Angola. They are experiencing terrible drought and because of that there is no crops and because of that there is no food. And these poor moms who are just like you and me -- they're just exactly like us who want to be able to provide for our children.

But here's the amazing thing. This is the thing that gives me hope. We can change this. It is not like this astronomical project that we can't possibly do. Every single one of us, I may as well let you know. My son who is 19 and my husband and I are all getting involved in this and we're all doing something differently.

So if you even just have \$30, you know \$30 will feed three children for three months? Don't you think it is kind of crazy that most of us here in the states or around the world and better countries where we have more resources, most of us are worrying about going on diets and these children are literally starving to death but we can change it.

It's our greatest godly privilege as sons and daughters of the king, not just to thank God for the destiny that he's given every single one of us but to do something in the name of Jesus.

So for any gift that you send in today, we're going to send you this *Living Your Destiny* series, these teaching tapes where you'll hear from Beth Moore, from Lisa Bevere, from Christine Caine, from Sarah Jakes Roberts and from myself. But if you send in \$100 or more we're also going to send you Chris Caine's new book which is phenomenal, it is called, *Unashamed*. If you've ever struggled with any kind of shame, this book will minister to you. And my own new book, *The Longing in Me*. How everything you crave leads to the heart of God.

But let's just decide you know what? -- Not in our time! We're going to draw a line in the sand here and say, "No more." We have so much and they have so little. So if every one of us thinks, okay, Lord, what can I do? And responds now because it is a crisis; it's not something that we can put off for a few months because the people that we work with in those areas, they are praying. They have told us the needs and said, "Will you get back with us and let us know are you able to help?"

I'm going to be going to Angola really soon and I want to be able to say to these local partners and ministries we work with, "I've shared it with our friends and the response has come in and we're going to help."

So please, would you do that? Would you go to your phone and call the number on your screen? Or go to LifeToday.org and make the best gift possible. Trust me! You can live without three more lattes but honestly, some of these children are not going to survive unless they have one more meal. So please would you do something now. Thank you!

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: As I kneel here by these beautiful children I want them to be healthy. You can look at this little girl's complexion right here if she'll step out in the light. See she has got some of the beautiful glow but she still has a little bit of the red tint in her hair, which simply means that we're bringing them up to a norm and this is a very poor area. If we don't continue to feed these children they'll just reverse and they'll go back into serious trouble.

We want to keep that going. We want these children to have an opportunity to get ahead in life. We don't want them to just survive. We want them to have a future and a hope because this is what God has for them. But it won't happen without your love.

So I pray you'll respond today. Make the largest gift you can. If you could put arms around -- see, here's five children right here. You just put arms around these five or maybe you could extend your arms all the way back here and you just take ten children into your arms; would you help care for these ten children? Would you do that?

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. Thank you so much! I have to say it's been such a joy to have you. I'm one of your biggest fans. You can go to -- what's your church's web site? One church L.A.?

Sarah: OneChurchLA.org.

Sheila: And hear Sarah and her husband preach; they are both amazing. When you hear them both preach you'll understand why they stare at each other lovingly.

[Laughter]

And really love each other. Thank you so much for being with us. Will you please help me thanks Sarah Jakes Roberts?

[Cheers & Applause]

We love you! Thanks for being with us. We'll see you again on *LIFE Today*!

Announcer: In his new book, *The Stream*, James Robison charts a clear path to personal revival and spiritual revolution in our culture, values, morals, and in government. Reverend Samuel Rodriguez says: "*The Stream* is a Christ-centered, Bible-based prescription for these troubled times." Dr. Ben Carson says: "This important book points out many ways that we can use our lives to preserve those freedoms that made America great." *The Stream* -- available now online and at retail bookstores.

