

12/8/16
Week 50: Fall Mission Feeding
Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh
Mark Batterson

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! This is a fun show. We have a great guest. I just can't hide it anymore. Mark Batterson is here. Would you welcome Mark?

[Cheers & Applause]

And Sheila has his new book. Show them his book.

Sheila: It's fantastic! *Chase the Lion*. In fact, the minute I saw it I thought back to the first book of yours of ever read was *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*. And honestly, I picked that up because I thought, what on earth is that about?

[Laughter]

But God really used that book to make a significant imprint in my heart. It really changed the way I dream.

Mark: And you remember the title. Not many people can remember that full title. That's impressive Sheila!

Randy: This one is easier. This one is *Chase the Lion*. My first thought was, is that really good advice?

[Laughter]

That's not natural, brother.

Mark: No. No. It's terrible advice unless you understand it in the biblical context. There is the most incredible story in Second Samuel 23:20 about Benaiah, one of David's mighty men who the Bible says chases a lion into a pit on a snowy day and kills it. That's pretty impressive. My big observation is if you're in a pit with a lion on a snowy day, you've got a problem.

[Laughter]

Probably the last problem you'll ever have.

But it looks pretty good on your resume if you're applying for a bodyguard position with the king of Israel. And that's what he becomes; eventually becomes the commander and chief of Israel's army. But I think it traces back to this moment that is fight or flight? Are you going to run away from what you're afraid of or are you going to run to the roar?

Sheila: Where did this journey begin for you?

Mark: I was 19 years old, Sheila and a preacher named Sanfarina was preaching a message on that verse. And just a thought kind of fired across my synapse. First of all, I thought that's the coolest verse in the Bible. I had to go and verify that it was in the Bible. But I remember thinking, if I ever write a book one day I'd love to write a book about that verse. So kind of tucked it away and it took many, many years but wrote *In a Pit*, and then of course the sequel, *Chase the Lions*.

Randy: It's interesting that that verse jumped out at you because one of the things you say in your book is that your life scripture, one of your favorite scriptures will become your life script. What do you think that's about? Because it is not the same for everyone.

Mark: Yeah. I think over time your favorite scripture becomes the script of your life. So for me, that verse just spoke to me because I don't want -- I think -- well, let me go on record, I'm against sins of commission. A sin of commission is doing something you shouldn't have done. But I think it is the sins of omission which you would have, could have, should have done that grieves the heart of God because potential is God's gift to us. Then what we do with it is our gift back to God. So I'm wired in a way that listen, we live in a culture where it is wrong to say something is wrong -- and I think that's wrong.

[Laughter]

Sheila: I big amen right there.

[Cheers & Applause]

Randy: I like that.

Mark: But I want to be more known for what I'm for than what I'm against. So I believe you write a better book, you produce a better film, you draft better legislation, you start a better business. Come on, we have the Holy Spirit not just on our side but in us helping us so we're

the ones that are called to not just create a little subculture over here but to redeem culture for Christ.

Randy: You're almost saying what Michelangelo says which is "criticize by creating." -- Another one of the quotes from his book. One of the most quotable books I've seen in a long time. Good stuff.

Sheila: What for you was the first scariest dream that you had that unless God was part of it it was not going to happen?

Mark: Yeah. Well, I've had a few of those. Certainly, at 22 years of age in seminary I had this dream of planting a church and when you're 22 you know just about everything.

Sheila: I remember! Yeah.

Mark: And I thought I had it all figured out.

Randy: Through the Bible belt because that would be easier; right?

Mark: It was not. Maybe that would have helped. Funny that we had a 25-year-plan for a church plant. My professor gave it an A. So it's got to work; right?

Sheila: Yeah! Yeah!

Mark: And that church plant failed. It was embarrassing. The compass needle was just spinning. We didn't know where to go or what to do. But learned two things: One unless the Lord builds the house they who labor labor in vain. That's a good lesson to learn at 22.

So even now pastoring a church for the past 20 years that has eight campuses, and God's using in the nation's capital, I realize that it's not really because of me. I think it's in spite of us that God does his best work. If you can stay out of the way, which I think you stay humble and you stay hungry and then there's nothing that God can't do in you or through you. So, valuable lesson.

I also learned the cure for the fear of failure is not success. I think it is failure in small enough doses that you build up some immunity to it and then you realize that God just picks you back up and he gives you a second chance and a third chance. And you realize his grace is in fact sufficient.

Sheila: It's so fascinating. Your church in Washington, D.C., as you say eight campuses, we don't get a whole bunch of good news out of Washington, D.C.

Mark: Really?

Randy: Especially lately.

Sheila: So what are you seeing God do because you're right there in the capital?

Mark: Can I just say that we're believing for revival. I would love to see it start right in the nation's capital. I know that the news coming out of our city is political and those are many of the people that I have the privilege of pastoring. And we need to pray for our leaders and pray for our country but I would also say that I believe it is the spiritual things, the spiritual undercurrent happening in the nation's capital, not just through National Community Church, through all of the churches in our city; that the unity is unbelievable and we're seeing God move in a really unprecedented way.

I would just remind folks that listen, I thank God for the democracy that we live in. I praise God that I'm an American. But I also know that God's kingdom came before and it will still be... Listen. His kingdom is going to come. His will is going to be done. It always prevails. I think that's a good reminder, especially when you pastor right in the shadow of the capital.

Sheila: I often think it would be great if the evening news, if the last line was, "But don't worry! God is still on the throne." Wouldn't that be great?

[Cheers & Applause]

Randy: So you're actually sitting, and have been for quite awhile, sitting in a place of opportunity for ministry. Yet, and I go back to the very quotable book, *Chase the Lion*, you say don't seek opportunity.

Mark: Yeah. Don't seek opportunity. Seek God and opportunity is going to seek you. Seek first the kingdom of God. And I'm a big believer in long obedience in the same direction. Eugene Peterson leveraged that phrase. I just think if you do the right things day in and day out, God's going to show up and show off. He who began a good work is going to carry it to completion. He is ordering our footsteps. He is preparing good works in advance. So our job is to plant and water, and then God shows up and he does what he does. In fact, could I share my verse of the year?

Sheila: Please!

Mark: I just started this practice a few years ago and it's become a meaningful thing for me. So Joshua 3:5 says: Consecrate yourselves to the Lord for tomorrow he will do amazing things among you.

All of us want to do something amazing for God but that's not our job. It's God's job to do the amazing things. Our job is to just consecrate ourselves. And if we do our job God is going to do his job.

Sheila: We like that.

Randy: I just want to be there for it. Make sure it's among -- he'll do amazing things among us.

Sheila: I know, everybody, I'm serious, you're going to absolutely want this book. I'll just give you one reason why. There's this fantastic thing at the beginning. I'm going to copy this out for my son who is 19. It is called "The Lion Chaser's Manifesto." So I'm going to read a couple of these and whenever I get to one that you want to say anything else about you just speak up.

Quit living as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death.

Run to the roar. What does that mean? How do you run to the roar?

Mark: I think it's not letting fear dictate your decisions, and that's easier said than done because I think many of us... Well, what's interesting is we're only born with two fears: The fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. Every other fear is learned which means that every other fear can be unlearned. And so perfect love casts out all fear, First John 4:18. So really, faith is the process of unlearning those fears. If you fear God you don't have to fear anything else. Isn't that beautiful? I think that's -- it's living in that place where you're really operating out of faith and not letting fear dictate the decisions.

Sheila: I love this too: Stop pointing out problems. Become part of the solution.

That is a word to the church. Don't you think? I feel that in my own heart.

Stop repeating the past, start creating the future.

Grab opportunity by the mane and don't let go.

But here's something I want you to talk about: Burn sinful bridges and blaze new trails.

Mark: Yeah.

Sheila: That will preach.

Mark: Well, yeah.

[Laughter]

And can I just say that I don't believe that -- some people employ a strategy that the way you stop sinning is by not sinning. Listen. I think you need a vision from God, a dream from God that's bigger and better than whatever temptation you face and whatever sin you're struggling with. That's why I make no apologies for talking about God-sized dreams; that if your dream doesn't scare you it's too small because God is the dream giver. His spirit, when he fills us, we begin to dream those dreams. And I think those dreams then begin to give us something to go after that we don't have time to waste our lives on the temptations that surround us because we're going after the dream that God's putting in our heart.

Randy: Probably wasn't a lot of sinning going on down in that cave when he was having to fight that lion; right?

Sheila: The thing I love about that is that God can give you a dream that is bigger and better than online pornography. I think of all the things that are sucking the life out of us, not just as a nation but even in the church; that so many have kind of lost their way because we've stopped dreaming those kind of big God-sized dreams.

Mark: Yeah. Sin is meeting a legitimate need in an illegitimate way; that that's often what we fall into.

The beautiful thing is that God has plans and purposes for us that are so much more compelling. It's just we often get distracted sideways energy. And I think when we lose that dream that God's put in our heart we kind of get into this routine or this cycle that we're not really headed anywhere.

I don't want to step on too many toes but honestly, I think that churches that don't have a vision often manufacture problems to keep themselves busy.

Sheila: Let's just sit with that for a minute!

Randy: Let's save that for another show.

Sheila: That's profound. Actually, that sounded prophetic to me.

Randy: I do have one question to step back from that precipice.

[Laughter]

Mark: Thank you!

Randy: This is my problem: I'm a dreamer. I've got great ideas every other day and most of them don't work out. But that's the problem for me is how do I know is this dream from God? Is this just some crack pot idea of mine? How do you know what I'm chasing is really the lion that God wants me to chase and not something else?

Mark: Well, the first thing I'd say is I'd rather have one God idea than a 1,000 good ideas. Good ideas are good but a God idea is something you're pretty certain that that didn't originate here; that God is speaking to you, moving on your heart and that's not easy to discern. I can't -- no one can give that answer to anybody else.

Part of it is just learning to discern the voice of God. The longer I'm married to my wonderful wife, Laura the more I understand her voice. In fact, we hardly even need to use words. We get each other's expressions. You learn God's voice and you begin to discern.

Randy: What about that dream that just won't go away? Is that a sign sometimes? Like the one you think, that's never going to happen. And I kind of tried it and it didn't work but it just won't go away; will keep you up at night.

Mark: Well, I felt called to write at 22. I didn't get that first book written until 35. That felt like forever. I had six half-finished manuscripts.

Honestly, every birthday became almost a reminder of a deferred dream to the point that I dreaded my birthday, until I finally leveraged it. My 35th birthday is I'm not turning 35 without writing a book. Now here's the thing, looking back, I'm almost grateful I didn't write a book at 22 because I would have had to write a book at 23 to retract what I said at 22.

[Laughter]

Randy: I get it. A lot of it is growth.

Mark: And I think most dreams go through a death and resurrection. And part of that death is that then it is almost resurrected in a glorified form. What I mean by that is there is a greater

insurance policy that God's going to get the glory for it. I'm not tempted to take any credit for what God's done with National Community Church because of that failed church plan.

So I'm grateful for that because I think it set the table for what God wanted to do next and I think that's a word of encouragement for anybody who's walked through one of those failures or disappointments.

Randy: Absolutely.

Sheila: I love that about you, Mark that you do share not just the things that God has done that are really incredible, but those moments... Because one of the things I noticed in our studio audience tonight is how many men are here. I think it is because you have become a biblical mentor in terms of not just sharing what's worked but what hasn't worked and enabling a generation of men to dream again.

I want you to know, you've had a profound impact on my darling husband and my son so I'm very grateful.

Mark: Thank you.

Randy: I like it so much. Can I say this? Yeah, my kids don't watch this show.

[Laughter]

Sheila: And why not?

Randy: Christmas gifts -- because they don't have television. Christmas gifts right here. Is that not an awesome idea for my son, for my teenage son?

Sheila: I know you think you're getting this one but I'm taking this one for my son.

Randy: Okay. Well, I know another way to get it. I can participate in mission feeding.

Sheila: And honestly, I mean I have seen with my own eyes. I get the privilege because of the way you guys have helped, I get to go. And I sat and fed a whole school full of children. They said, "You want somebody to help?" I'm like, "No! Let me do it!" It was so awesome.

So I want you to see the difference that some God-sized dreams are making in the lives of children way across the world. Watch this.

On the mission field

Jeanne: Let me just talk about this a little bit. There are a lot of signs of malnutrition in this child. That's the good thing about this; that good, regular feedings with this will change that for her. Otherwise, if she keeps going the way she's going, she will be heading toward the malnutrition clinic and we are here to stop that.

Announcer: This is the face of a life who has been saved; the face of someone who now has the opportunity to reach her god-given potential. And she has some of you to thank for that. This is difficult to accept. But there are some who advocate an approach of non-intervention when it comes to child hunger and malnutrition -- to let nature take its course. Simply let them die.

At *LIFE Outreach*, we believe compassion for these children is the right choice. Together we've been able to prevent the deaths of millions of children by helping provide basic needs essential to human life.

But our work is far from over. When you make the decision to support mission feeding you literally help save lives from the ravages of malnutrition, and you also send these children a message that they matter, they're not forgotten, and they have a future.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I don't know about you but something just rose up in me when I heard that people would say, "let nature take its course." I say no. Let the love of Christ take its course through the body of Christ. We are there to make a difference in this world.

Randy: I'm glad God doesn't take an attitude of non-intervention in my life because I would be in serious trouble. That's why we don't take an attitude of non-intervention.

We think this is not something that is cool or fun to do or maybe noble. We think this is the calling of Christ on our lives as Christians to reach out and to share his life, literally, his love with others around the world. And what's more obvious than people who need food? Lord, give us this day our daily bread. We take that as a nice spiritual thing, and it is, but for them, it is literal. They literally don't have anything to eat.

So the question is what will we do? We've made our decision so now the question is put to you, what will you do? We're asking you to join us. It doesn't take much. A little bit of a sacrifice, \$30, \$50, \$100 on the lower end will feed three, five, or ten children for three whole months. We do have some of our faithful donors who have come together and said, "We will double that gift in impact." They'll match your gift so giving today makes twice as much sense as any other day.

But it's really about doing something. It is about participating. It is about all of us doing what we can because there are some of you that the widow's mite is everything and God knows that, we know that, and we rejoice in that ability. For some of you, the school sponsorship of \$1400 where we feed children in the schools, which is a great way to not just give them food but to teach them the skills so that they can be self-sufficient because we're thinking long term here. Some of you, \$1400 is nothing. Some of you can double that, triple that. Do what God has enabled you to do. I can promise you, he'll bless you for sharing his life and his love with others. You can't go wrong.

So as we approach Christmas, and we're thinking about our own needs. I know it is a busy time in our lives. I just ask you to take this moment, think about someone else. Join with us, go to the phone right now, go online if that's how you give, that's how I like to give. You can mail it if you're more comfortable doing that. I just want you to do something right now to join with us as we reach out and save the lives of children across Africa. And we also share the gospel of Christ in our actions as we share mission feeding.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished villages of Africa children are suffering, desperately in need of life saving food, facing death by starvation.

LIFE's mission feeding program is there, ready now to feed and care for children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With all of our previous reserves gone, and Angola facing a record food shortage due to crop failure, we need to immediately replenish our funding and supplies for our feeding programs.

As an answered prayer, a group of *LIFE's* friends have set a \$400,000 matching gift challenge for mission feeding! This means your gift today could have a double impact! \$30 for three children will be doubled to help feed six children! \$50 to help five children will be doubled to save ten children! And \$100 for ten children will be doubled to help feed 20 children! And don't forget, your \$1400 gift to sponsor a school will now be doubled to feed children in two schools!

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *Without Rival* by author Lisa Bevere. With your double impact gift of \$100 or more please request *The Complete Illustrated Children's Bible*. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1000, which will now be doubled to help feed 200 children and you may request our beautiful Majesty bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

On the mission field

Betty: I looked at this line of children here and I thought how can you not be touched? God's touched. He cares about them.

I just visualized some of my grandchildren's faces on these children and I think, what if that was one of them? I would want somebody to come in and give them a bowl of soup. I would want somebody to care about them.

Well, these children matter. They matter to God a whole lot. I know that your heart must be touched as you look at these lines of children, look at their little innocent faces. They don't have a choice. They depend on someone. Can that someone be us? I want it to be me.

Thank you so much for caring and sharing and having a heart to reach out to those that are needy because that's God's heart and that's good.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! We can make the best Christmas ever for so many mothers and children around the world. And for any gift at all, we will send you this amazing book, *Chase the Lion*.

Randy: Yes! Do ask for that if you want it. But I'll tell you what. If you're interested in this children's Bible because this is for someone younger in your life, a child or grandchild or someone in the neighborhood, I want you to know that if you participate in mission feeding today and ask for this, you will get it by Christmas. It makes a great Christmas gift as well as Mark's book.

Would you please say thank you to Mr. Mark Batterson for being with us?

[Cheers & Applause]

I appreciate you Mark! I appreciate you being here.

I appreciate you being here and watching and participating in mission feeding and joining us here every day on *LIFE Today*.