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Week 7: WFL

Wednesdays in the Word

Sheila Walsh: “Living in Peace”

Sheila: Welcome to *Wednesdays in the Word*. I’m Sheila Walsh. Thanks for tuning in. Here’s what I want us to look at today. I want us to look at what does it mean to have peace in this world?

Peace is a word that gets bandied around a lot. They have peace talks between nations. And for that kind of peace to work something’s got to shift, something’s got to change. One side either gives in or they come to some kind of compromise. It became just a pop culture world. You have Ryan Seacrest, “Peace out!”

But Jesus talked a lot about peace; in particular, I love John’s gospel! There’s something so... I can’t wait when we get to heaven to meet John. There is something so sweet about him. I know he was probably the youngest of the disciples and he really loved Jesus and he really got it – that Jesus loved him. In fact, the next time you read through John’s gospel watch for this. Every time he mentions himself he will say, “John, the disciple Jesus loved.” I love that! I think that it’s just darling that he really got it – that Jesus loved him. And even when it comes to the resurrection story and they’ll talk about Peter and John ran to the tomb and John got there first. There’s just something very disarming about John, the Apostle John, the disciple.

But in his gospel he gives us such a gift through the Holy Spirit of so much of that final last conversation that Christ had with his very closest friends. If you haven’t read John 14, 15, 16, and 17 recently, or if you’ve never done it, grab a Bible, read those four chapters because you and I are in it! Not only does Jesus pray for his best friends in the room, he then prays for you and I. He said, “Father, for those that are going to believe, that are coming up a bit later,” and He prays for us. It would be good for you to look at what Jesus prayed for. It’s pretty amazing.

But He talks a lot about peace. I’m just going to highlight a couple of verses. This is John 14:27 and this is what Jesus says about peace here:

“I’m leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

Interesting! “I’m leaving you with a gift.” In many ways, this is really the last will and testament of Christ. His friends didn’t know it but He knew that when He walked up that hill to Calvary He was not coming back. That was always a one-way ticket for a condemned man. So even though they don’t realize what Christ is gifting them with is this:

“Peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give.”

What that must mean is if peace in this world among people, somebody has to change or the circumstances have to change. What Christ is saying is, “No, I’m not talking about that kind of peace. The peace I can give you is something the world has no clue about.”

He goes on in John 16 to say this:

“I have told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith.”

Interesting... because some of the things that Christ is telling them here are really devastating. He goes on to say, “Some of you -- you’re all going to leave me.” He said, “There is a time coming when people are going to come after you and destroy you and they’re going to think they’re doing it for God.” It’s interesting He would say, “I’ve told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith.”

But here’s how John 16 ends. This is Jesus talking to His disciples and to you and me.

“I’ve told you all of this, the good and the bad so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart because I have overcome the world.”

See, that made me ask a lot of questions. Do you know that it’s okay to question God? When I was a young girl in my faith I always felt like I shouldn’t really question God because let’s just go with the basics, He’s God and I’m not. But I’ve realized that I think the depth that we’re willing to wrestle with our faith, to question God indicates the depth of our intimacy with Him.

One of the things I love most about being a mom is that my son will tell me the truth. Every year we have a thing where I’ll say to him, “Christian, what can I do differently this year? What would matter to you?”

Sometimes when he was younger it was as simple as, “Every Tuesday night would you shoot hoops with me?”

I’m like, “Yeah! Sure!”

But I’ll also ask him, “Christian, is there anything I do that you wish I would change that’s uncomfortable for you?”

I remember his answer one time. He said, “Yeah! Mom there is. Dad can be a little hard on me sometimes because he’s a perfectionist. And if he’s saying something, you interrupt and you get involved and honestly, Mom, it makes it worse. Dad and I love each other. We can work it out on our own.” I thought that was great!

Intimacy allows for honesty. So if you’re struggling in your faith you’re allowed to be honest about that. But it made me dig really deep because I thought Lord, I want to know what does that kind of peace look like? The conclusion I’ve come to is this. This sounds like a bumper sticker but I actually really believe it. *Peace is not the absence of trouble, it is the presence of Christ.*

Jesus said, “In this world... you will not, there is a slight possibility that one or two of you...” No! “In this world you will have trouble but take heart because I’ve overcome the world.”

So I wanted to know, Lord, what does that look like? So I went to the shortest gospel in the Bible and that’s Mark’s gospel. There is something very exciting about Mark’s gospel. If you read it just in one – it’s like you start at one pace and the tempo picks up and picks up and picks up and you realize, you’re on the way to the cross. But before we get to that, there’s two stories that are back-to-back that show us whether the storm is outside your life or inside your life. When Christ speaks peace, both have to obey.

The first one is found at the end of Mark chapter four. You might remember, it’s a story where, I’ll just read a couple of verses. This is Mark 4:35:

As evening came, Jesus said to His disciples, “Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.” So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind.

But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat and it began to fill with water. Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke Him up shouting, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re going to drown?”

When Jesus woke up, He rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Silence. Be still.”

The wind stopped and there was a great calm.

Then He asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

It’s interesting. If you look at the first verse read I there it said: *Jesus said to His disciples, “Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.”* He didn’t say, “Let’s go halfway across and drown.” You know Christ, when He gives you your Word, He’s going to get you all the way across. Christ said that He’s committed to completing the work He began in us. He doesn’t abandon us halfway through the journey.

But here's what I found interesting. The words that Jesus uses here in the Greek where He says, "Silence. Be still." We find it right at the beginning of Mark's gospel and it is a man who is possessed by an evil spirit. Jesus says to him, this is Mark 1:25, "Silence. Be quiet."

You know I think it's fascinating that those two words are the same. Something was about to happen when that boat hit the shore and the enemy didn't want it because on the other side of the shore there was a man who had been tormented for all of his life. We call him the Gadarene demoniac; that's usually how he is referred to, a demon-possessed man.

The interesting thing is Jesus had never been to that part of the Sea of Galilee before. No Jew would ever go there. It was a burial ground for start, it was very unclean. They kept pigs there which is an unclean animal to a Jew. But there was one man who cried out. Scripture says that – if I'll just read you a little of the story, probably one of the most desperate figures that we'll ever meet in scripture. Here's how we read the story in Mark chapter five:

So they arrived at the other side of the lake. When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from a cemetery to meet him. This man lived among the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. Whenever he was put into chains and shackles – as he often was – he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.

I wonder if you've ever found yourself in a place like that? Oh, not, maybe as desperate looking on the outside. How many times have you cried out in the middle of the night, "God, do you even see me?"

I've talked to so many young girls who are cutters. I've talked to young boys who are cutters where they'll cut themselves, almost as if the physical pain for a moment helps them forget about the deep soul pain that's inside. But do you know that Christ Himself got into a boat and even though I believe the demons stirred up the waters so He wouldn't make it all the way across, Christ stood and said, "Silence!" because He heard that one man's cry. Let's find out what happened to him.

When Jesus was still some distance away the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before Him.

That's fascinating to me. This man has no clue who Jesus is but the demons inside him did. I believe that the moment Christ put His foot on that shoreline, the demons inside that man, for the first time perhaps in his life, backed away because they recognized the Son of God. That's why

this man ran to Jesus and fell at His feet, basically saying, “I don’t know who you are but the darkness that’s inside of me is afraid of you.”

Here’s what happened to him. The demons began to respond to Christ:

With a shriek they scream, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God I beg you don’t torture us.”

For Jesus had already said to the spirit, “Come out of this man, you evil spirit.”

Then Jesus demanded, “What’s your name?”

And he replied, “My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man.”

A Roman legion was 800 soldiers.

Then the evil spirits begged again and again not to be sent to some distant place. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. “Send us into those pigs,” the spirits begged. “Let us enter them”

So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs and the entire herd of 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.”

So let’s just look at this. For the disciples, they’ve just crossed the lake, got into a storm that was so fierce, I mean they’re fishermen, that’s their life. This storm is different. They think we’re not going to make it out of this one. Then they land on the shore and this crazy dude comes running out of the caves toward them.

This is a three Advil situation for the disciples. This is terrible. And yet, with all the craziness going on, because 2,000 pigs squealing and running off a cliff, the people who are in charge of the pigs running into the town saying, “Hey! I know you think you still own pigs. Technically, you don’t. They’re at the bottom of the lake.” Craziness! Where is peace in that situation? This is what we find out:

The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting at Jesus’ feet, clothed and perfectly sane.

Where was peace found in that situation? It was found at the feet of Jesus. Peace is not the absence of trouble, peace is the presence of Christ. You think well, Jesus doesn’t physically walk

on this earth now. If I could see Him I would go, I would run and I'd throw myself down at His feet. Let me show you what that looks like in my life.

When our son was maybe ten I could just tell as a mom there was something wrong with him. I'd taken him to the doctor a couple of times and they couldn't find anything. But on this third trip they came up with something that troubled them a little bit. They said, "You know what? We want to have you Friday for a scan eight o'clock in the morning."

Here's the thing. Friday, eight o'clock in the morning I had a commitment to be on the East Coast, I was speaking at a crisis pregnancy dinner. So I immediately thought, I'll call one of my friends to take my place. I'm going to be there with Christian.

We discussed it in the car back and Christian said, "No, Mom. You should go."

I said, "Christian, I'm not going to go when you're going to be in a procedure like that."

He said, "Listen, Mom. You've shown me pictures of these women. You've shown me some of the little babies that have been born. We've prayed for this event, Mom. Dad will be with me and if something bad shows up then you'll be with me for the next part but I think you should go."

I struggled with that. But eventually, as a family we decided.

But here's the deal. So eight o'clock Friday morning, Christian and his dad are sitting, waiting to be called back for the scan. Eight o'clock Friday morning, what does it look like where I am? It looks like I'm at Gate B26 at the airport. But here's where I am, I'm at the feet of Jesus. You don't have to physically see Jesus to be at the feet of Jesus. To people it just looked like I was at the boarding gate. That's not where I was – I was at the feet of Jesus. It might have looked like I was in seat 22B. Nope! I was at the feet of Jesus.

I made my way to the banquet that night and I'm sitting at the table and they're about to introduce me and suddenly I get a text from Barry and Christian saying, "We got the result back."

So I said to the girl who was about to introduce me, "Can you just stretch a little bit. I need to go and make a quick call."

So I ran outside and I text and I get Christian on the phone and I said, "How did it go, baby?"

He said, "Mom, it was so cool. I saw all my organs. It was amazing!"

I said, "Would you get to the other part?" And discovered it was something very minor, something very fixable.

But here's the truth, a couple of things, all day I was kept at peace because I was at the feet of Jesus. The thing is, He loves us more than we could ever begin to love each other. Maybe you think, well, you don't understand what my child is going through right now. And I don't. And if you're in a hard situation with a child, my heart aches with you. And even right now, even right now I agree with you in prayer for the healing power of Christ to touch your child. Where two or three gather together, He's here. Where two of you agree in something as touching heaven, it will be done. So I agree with you.

But here's what I want you to know. No matter what you're struggling with right now, you can know peace because Christ... From the moment I wake up in the morning, my first thing is always like, "Good morning, Lord! I've no idea where you're going today but wherever it is, I am coming with you" because that's where peace is found. In my life, there's not peace anywhere else.

Here's one of the most amazing things. I think I wrote it on a card because I was sure I wouldn't be able to find the actual thing. I love this! Right at the very end of the story, in John's gospel, he talks about the fact that Jesus gave him all these little peace messages all the way through that final talk because He knew where He was headed. They didn't. He was saying, "I've told you these things. I've told you it was going to happen so you won't abandon your faith."

But here's the most amazing thing! After the crucifixion and all the disciples split and ran apart from John, and then came that resurrection morning, do you remember slightly further on when Christ appears to the disciples, what was His first words to them? "Peace, be still! Here I am." The trouble was still going on outside for the disciples, they were still being hunted down but Christ was there.

So what I want you to know, to understand, to grasp hold of is whether you're in financial trouble right now, whether you have relational trouble right now, whatever is going on Christ has promised a peace that's not like the world gives, He's promised us that peace is not the absence of trouble, it's His presence. Here at *LIFE* we've discovered that when we find a place where there is some trouble, we want to bring some peace and some life in Jesus' name. Watch this.

On the mission field

Ralph: We're here today in the heart of Africa and we walked upon this water source. Personally, it almost makes me nauseous just watching them collect it and drink it. But this is their life. Yumbu!

Open captions:

>> This lady here has lost two of her kids.

Ralph: What's her name?

Open captions:

>> Emeline.

Ralph: She's lost two children from the bad water.

Open Captions:

>> My first child who died was Valente, who say 5 years old. The other was Osta, who was 2. If I think of them I can't eat. I'll just spend the day sleeping.

Announcer: Tragedy -- it's a word we use for an unbelievable loss, like the deaths of Emeline's two children. But Emeline's tragedy goes beyond loss of life. It's her helplessness to change what precipitated it: Contaminated drinking water.

Open Captions:

>> There is no day we don't bury a child because of bad water.

Announcer: God has blessed our efforts to provide over 5,000 water wells around the world but we shouldn't make the mistake thinking our work is done. As it stands today, in this village, Emeline can either give her remaining children the same filthy water that killed their siblings -- or even worse, withhold water altogether and that's a decision that no parent should have to make.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Can you imagine as a mom being left with that kind of choice? Can you imagine living in a village where there is not a day goes by that a child is not buried because of the impact of drinking the kind of water that is just absolutely filthy? We've been with Ralph on trips like that and we've seen what it's like. It's unbelievable! Even just to pick it up and look at it, there's so much dirt in the water that we see with our eyes! But it what we don't see with our eyes that's causing so much trouble. These moms, I sat with a mom who said, "I just can't even sleep anymore. I can't even sleep because I wonder what tomorrow will bring for my children."

But we have seen the difference. I love that we call it "Water for Life" because it literally is that. When we put a well in a village like the one you just saw, it provides water for a whole village

for their lifetime. These wells that we put in, they'll last for like 70 years! So it's an incredible investment.

Our goal is 188 wells in 188 villages. We can do this. You and I together, we can do this! \$48 will provide clean water for 10 people. But one new thing I wanted to tell you about. I saw on my last trip that some of the villages are actually hard to get to, we're finding ways but it is hard to get through some of this terrain to be able to drill. So they've come up with this fantastic new thing. It is like a big bucket with "Water for Life" and it's a filtration system. So all that filthy water goes into this bucket and then as it comes out it's almost – they've compared it to like kidney dialysis. What comes out is fresh, clean water. All the bad stuff has been removed. And what's available.

And for \$100, you will provide a water filtration for three families. Can you imagine what it would be like to put one of those blue buckets in the hands of three moms and say listen, you can go gather that water. That's all you've got right now. You go gather it. But you bring it home and you pour it through this system and you will be able to give your children clean, fresh water.

Please join with us. I want us to exceed this goal this year. We can all do something. Maybe you can't do a lot but you could do something. So please call that number on your screen or go online, LifeToday.org. If you're sending in a check could you maybe even give us a call and say, "Hey! This is what's on the way." So that we can begin to plan and let these people know, and let our partners know, "Hey! Great news! Water is coming. Wells are coming. Filtration systems are coming." But bring hope to these moms who find it hard to go to sleep wondering what tomorrow will bring for their little ones.

Together, we can do this. Perhaps you'd like to do it as a family! For \$4800 you can drill one of those 188 wells. Wouldn't that be a great gift to give this year? Thank you so much!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children living in extreme poverty 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.

Our teams have recently identified 188 remote villages in southern Africa where children are suffering from contaminated, disease ridden water. The situation is desperate. They need clean disease-free water immediately.

With your gift today you can help drill fresh water wells in remote villages across seven African nations. Your gift of \$24 will provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will provide for

ten. \$72 provides for 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift we'll send you Sheila Walsh's devotional, *5 Minutes with Jesus*, a fresh infusion of joy to help you experience a deeper connection with God.

Please consider an additional gift of \$100 to help provide three families with water filtration kits in emergency areas where our rigs cannot reach. And you may request our "No Greater Name" canvas print.

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 you may request our beautiful new hand-painted "Determined Eagle" bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

On the mission field

Sheila: I put my hand in this water; and a couple of inches it disappears. This water is absolutely filthy! That's why there's such – this is not something that we can wait for another week, another month. This is all they have today. This is all this mom and these two girls and all these villagers and hundreds of villages around Africa are like.

They need clean water! And one well, one water well will last a whole lifetime and it will change their life. So many of these children die because of waterborne diseases. You just have to look at it. I wouldn't let my dogs drink out of this. This is horrible! But we can make a difference. Would you go to your phone right now and just do whatever you can?

Can you imagine if you couldn't – if this was all you had to give to your children? I can't imagine that. So go to your phone. Call that number on your screen, go online, give the best gift – just whatever you have. If you've got a lot, give a lot. If you've got a little, give what you can. But whatever you give will bring water for life for these families.

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. I cannot tell you how we, the staff here at *LIFE*, how grateful we are. We can't do this alone and you can't do it alone. But when we partner together, we can literally change the world and give fresh clean water. For any gift you send in I'll be happy to send you my new book, *5 Minutes with Jesus: A Fresh Infusion of Joy*. For a gift \$1200 or you wanted to drill a well, we'll send you this beautiful "Determined Eagle" based on Isaiah 40:31.

Whatever you can do, thank you so much for helping us. I look forward on seeing you on the next *Wednesdays in the Word*. Remember, if you need some help, we're always here for you at *LIFE*. God bless you!

Announcer: In his new book, *Living Amazed* James Robison shares how divine encounters can change your life. *Living Amazed* -- coming soon to online and retail bookstores.