

2/15/17
Week 8: WFL
Wednesdays in the Word
Sheila Walsh: "Does God See Me?"

Sheila: Hello and welcome to the *Wednesdays in the Word*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad you took a few moments to stop and just kind of hang here. I was thinking about this show before I came to the studio and praying for anybody out there who might feel, does God really see me? I think one of the hardest things, one of the most challenging things to faith is that sometimes we pray and we ask God for something and it's not something ridiculous like a parking spot at the mall. It is something that really matters. Perhaps today you find yourself in a situation where your own health is really compromised. Perhaps it is your child. Perhaps you've been praying for so long for your husband to find a job. And there are things that you know are good things to ask the Lord and you've done everything you know to do and still you don't get an answer.

Maybe you compare your life to some other people and you think, well, she prayed that her husband would come back and he did. I prayed and mine didn't. So what did I do wrong?

One of the hardest things that ever happened when I used to co-host the 700 Club on the Christian Broadcasting Network and one day after our program I saw a man in our studio audience kind of holding his wife's head up. She was clearly very sick. So I went over to talk to them.

He said, "I drove my wife five hours to come here because I thought if you prayed for her then maybe she would get well."

I said to him, "Do you believe that God would answer me quicker than he would answer you? Do you think my prayers are more effective than yours?"

And I could tell that he was in that desperate place of thinking, you know what? I honestly don't know but I'll do anything. I'll do anything!

And it was my joy, absolute joy and privilege to pray for this woman and to pray for her husband. But it really set me off thinking, so often when God doesn't act the way that we

expect him to act we wonder what's wrong with me? What did I do wrong? Does God hear me?

One of the girls I met years ago, she wrote me a letter and she said, "First of all I want to say thank you because I watch your program twice a day. And she said, "Sometimes it really helps me. And sometimes I want to take my shoe off and throw it through the screen."

Well, I was intrigued. She left a phone number so I called her. I said, "Listen. This is Sheila Walsh. I hope you don't mind me calling you."

She said, "No. I kind of actually hoped you might."

I said, "Okay, first of all, two questions. One, why do you watch our show twice a day?"

And she said, "Well, I'm terminally ill and I look for anything that might be encouraging."

I said, "I understand and I'm so sorry." I said, "Honestly, the question I really want an answer to is why do you sometimes feel like taking off your shoe and throwing it through the screen?"

She said, "Because you only ever tell stories of those who get the answer they pray for. You don't ever show stories of people like me who love God and haven't gotten an answer yet and still worship him."

That day, I actually went to one of my producers and said, "Listen. I don't know how hard it will be but I want to do a program just with this girl."

I talked to her mom and I asked her if she was well enough to travel and we had to get a nurse but she came in and I spent 30 minutes interviewing this amazing young woman who didn't get the answer she prayed for but still loved God.

That's what made me think about you today. I'm wondering if you're in a place where you've prayed for something and you haven't seen an answer and you wonder, is it me? The thing that was heartbreaking about this young woman was she said, "I thought maybe I'm praying the wrong way." She said, "I saw you once on television and you got down on your knees and I thought, that might be more effective. So I got down on my knees and I dislocated my hip." Her body was already so fragile because of the cancer. That's heartbreaking!

So what I want us to look at today is a story of a woman who prayed for 12 years for an answer. I want you to see what happened to her in the end. We find her story in Mark's gospel; I'm reading from the New Living Translation. So I'll just read a few verses and then I want to share

some things that you might not be aware of but it is my prayer that it would encourage you to know that God sees you and he hears your prayer and you are not forgotten.

So it is Mark 5:21 and it says this: Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. There a leader of the local synagogue whose name was Jairus arrived. When he saw Jesus he fell at his feet pleading fervently with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and lay your hands on her. Heal her so she can live."

Jesus went with him and all the people followed crowding around him. A woman in the crowd had suffered for 12 years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them but she hadn't gotten any better. In fact, she had gotten worse.

She had heard about Jesus so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe for she thought to herself, if I can just touch his robe I will be healed. Immediately the bleeding stopped and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.

I want us to compare these two women that we're introduced to. One, we learn later in Mark is a 12-year old girl, a very well loved girl. We know from church history that Jairus was a very respected leader of the synagogue. So he was a very influential man in his community. And for him to come at that point in Christ's ministry and throw himself at the feet of Jesus was huge because most people particularly the Jewish leaders still thought that there was something really bad about Christ.

But Jairus had faith. So he came and he fell at Christ's feet and he said, "Please! My daughter is dying. Will you come?"

I want you to contrast that with the person who's only identified as "a woman in the crowd." We're not even told her name. For every moment of this girl's life, remember this girl is 12, this woman has been suffering. So here you have a girl, a well-loved girl growing up in a beautiful home with a very compassionate caring father. For every single day of that girl's life this other woman has been suffering.

Now I don't know how much you know about the Jewish laws in the Old Testament. We tend know about the big 10, the 10 commandments but there were actually 613 laws that if you loved God in those days and you wanted to live a life that was holy, you had to follow all 613 laws. But one of them -- one of them really burned this woman. She was considered because she had that condition, she was considered unclean and not even able to come to the temple.

Here's what it says about her in Leviticus 15:30. This is a condition that if the bleeding stopped, here's what it says:

In this way, she can return to the house of God. The priest will make her clean so that she can belong to the Lord again.

Can you imagine? 12 years she has been faithful, she has prayed, she can't go to the synagogue.

Now in those days with her condition even if she was married, she is no longer living with her husband. If you were her best friend, you can't invite her over for coffee because everything she sat on would be considered unclean. If you gave her a cup of coffee, that cup would then be considered unclean. She has lived this desperately lonely life for 12 years.

But in Mark's gospel we read that she heard about Jesus and she believed "if I just touch the edge of his garment I'll be healed." Can you imagine that? Can you imagine every night for 12 years because with this condition -- I have a friend who has this condition, it is called hemorrhagia. She is a school teacher. She's had it for 3 years. Most days she has to be really careful because if she stands up at the blackboard for too long she gets very weak and she can faint.

This woman has been suffering for 12 years so she is very weak, she is very thin, her bones are very brittle. But I believe she still got down on her knees and prayed and said, "God do you hear me? Do you hear me? God of Abram, Isaac and Jacob, do you hear my prayer?"

This lonely woman! She wouldn't even be able to go out in the crowd during the day because the rule of the day was if -- like say she was walking along the street and three of her friends that she went to school with came out of a house and didn't see her and were about to bump into her, she was obliged to stop and call out "unclean" so that they could hurry away. So I imagine she probably only went out at night and stood under the stars and said, "God, do you hear me? Do you see me?"

But then she hears that Jesus is coming through town and she has an opportunity. But even as she realizes that she has an opportunity things start to change because suddenly here comes Jairus and she knows who he is. He is a very influential man. He falls on his feet and says, "Jesus, will you come to my house?" So her moment is moving away quickly as Jesus turns and the whole crowd begin to move that way.

I imagine her standing there because here's the deal. She doesn't know what's going to happen because if she touches Jesus and he doesn't heal her, she has now made Jesus unclean and he cannot go to the house and heal that little girl. So what does she do? If she was caught she would be held responsible but she was desperate. Have you ever been desperate? Have you

ever just been in the place where you're like Lord, I'm so desperate. I will do anything!

I remember reading something before I was ever admitted as a patient to a psych hospital where I was just living with this horrible darkness every day. -- Just this deep despair. And I read somewhere, it said, "When the pain of remaining the same is greater than the pain of change then you're ready to change." "When the pain of remaining the same is greater than the pain of change then you're ready to change." I believe that's where she was. She was so desperate.

I imagine that as she followed the crowd parted just a tiny little bit and she reached out in faith and touched just a tassel at the edge of Jesus' garment and in a moment she felt it. She felt the power of Christ go through her and she knew she was healed. Jesus knew it too. Let's read on and see what happened.

Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him. So he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?" His disciples said to him, "Look at this crowd pressing around you? How can you ask who touched me?" But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman trembling at the realization of what had happened to her came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. One translation says she told him the whole truth.

And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

I think that's such an interesting dialogue. You can imagine everywhere Jesus went there were huge crowds. So he is walking along and there's crowds all around him but he feels power go out and he knows it was faith and he stops and Jairus is waiting. This important man is waiting but he stops and he said, "Who touched me?"

And the disciples are like, "Are you kidding? This is like we're at the Super Bowl. Everybody touched you."

And Jesus is so gracious. He honestly could have said, "Listen fat heads. I'm not talking about that. Somebody touched me in faith."

But he didn't. Here's what I love. He stopped and he waited. "Who touched me?"

Now this woman has a dilemma now. If she comes forward and says, "it was me" technically she could be severely disciplined. Here's the other thing. She knows she is already healed. So all she had to do was slip away from the crowd, go home, wait for seven days, go to the priest, offer a little bird as a sacrifice, he would declare her clean and she can go on with life.

Nobody needs to know. It's one of those real crossroad moments in life where Jesus waits. Have you ever been in a place where you know the Holy Spirit is moving and the Lord is waiting to say, "Who reached out? Who touched me?"

And she takes huge risk, the whole crowd is watching thinking what is going on? And this woman falls at the feet of Jesus and tells him the whole truth.

One thing I love is up until that moment the only way we know her in scripture, some people call her "the woman with the issue of blood" but Mark describes her as just "a woman in the crowd." But Jesus looks at her and he gives her a new name. He says to her, "daughter."

Do you know that is the only time in the three-year ministry of Christ that he ever calls one woman, "daughter." There is a time when he is going up the hill to Calvary where he turns to the weeping women and calls them "daughters of Jerusalem." But this, this profoundly intimate moment is the only time when Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God looks into the eyes of this woman who has lived a lonely, broken, desperate life and says to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

Christ claimed her in that crowd. In that crowd of people who wouldn't have gone near her for 12 years, Christ owns her. She is family. She is mine. Eventually the people say to Jairus, "Listen. He waited too long. I'm really sorry to tell you this but your daughter died."

Jesus said, "No. Let's go."

And he goes to the house and people are wailing and weeping and Jesus says to them, "Why are you crying?"

They said, "Because she is dead."

And Christ goes into the room where this beautiful little 12-year old girl is laid out and he takes her hand and he brings her back to life. He turns to the dad and says, "She might be hungry."

Even though I love both of these stories, I would be remiss not to mention that they leave us with a mystery. Why did Christ answer the prayer of a father who is maybe the daughter has been sick for two weeks, three weeks, a month, we don't know. Why did that woman have to wait for 12 years? I don't pretend to understand. I don't understand always the workings of God but one thing I want you to know, if you are suffering, if you wonder, does anybody really love me? Maybe you feel like an outcast in your town. Maybe even choices you've made; maybe you think, well, that woman probably didn't do anything wrong but I made a lot of bad choices.

I got a call the other night from a girl. I've known her for years. She is struggling. She is an alcoholic; fallen off the wagon again. She said, "I'm a terrible person. I'm a terrible mother."

I said, "No, you're not. You're a broken woman like every single other woman who walks on this planet."

You know what the great thing is? There is no sale-by-date on grace. Grace doesn't have a shelf life. The grace of God is available for every single one of us. So I just want you to know, don't give up praying. God hears. Don't believe the lies of the enemy who tell you you're not loved. You're seen, you're known, and you are loved.

Out of the depth of that kind of love we want to reach out to others who are struggling around the world in more practical ways. Their need is simply this, wouldn't it be great to have some clean water. Watch this.

On the mission field

Announcer: Our mission team sees many heartbreaking needs while on location. So it's especially rewarding to show viewers the profound impact your partnership with us has had in people's lives. Like this dedication of a freshwater well.

Families whose only choice was to drink contaminated water will now have permanent access to clean and safe water for the first time in their lives.

But many live in areas that are simply inaccessible to our drilling rigs.

Ralph: There are places up in the mountain areas especially where they cannot get well drilling rigs. The sources that they get this water from is just like mud puddles. It is full of germs. There is a shot of their water that they would bring to their home to give their children on a daily/weekly basis.

Announcer: Recently though, our missions director was shown a solution to this problem. And we

think it is a game changer.

Ralph: *LIFE* has been given an opportunity to bring these water filtration systems into the mountains. This is the part that is going to clean the water into beautiful life-giving water. So you put the filter on, it screws on real easy and within just a few minutes they will have beautiful clean water. They are no longer bringing water that is killing their child, they can get water that brings life to their child.

Announcer: Incredibly, this filter system transforms dirty water into clean water; and clean water is what we want every child to have. Along with drilling freshwater wells, this filter system represents powerful solutions to a problem God is using us all to help solve. One village, one family, and one life at a time.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'm going to get my staff to cut back in the big well; and you see the water coming in and all of them happy. That's kind of in the community; you can see that. But right here, a mother can take that water home and then begin to filter that for that child.

Betty, you've watched so many of them pray, who had lost a child and knew they would lose another and possibly another. What does that do to you when you see how simple that is?

Betty: That's awesome! It's the best thing yet to come up with where you can't drill in certain areas to offer this to a family. Can you imagine the joy that would bring that mother to know that, did you notice the two glasses he held up? One had the diseased water in it and the other was pure and clean.

Which one would you pick for your child? I know what these mothers would do. I know which one they would go for.

You can tell by the smiles on their faces, James, they were just so delighted and so -- it builds hope within their hearts to know that they're doing something good for their children.

James: You know what I was thinking watching your smile? Which your smile is always beautiful. But when you are rejoicing with somebody else I think it takes even another step up. But you know what I was thinking of when I was watching Betty smile and seeing those little kids smile and then watching the joy when they get a big well? Now they've got that little cup of water that they can have all day long no matter what the source is like. I saw that smile, I've got to be honest with you, I felt like it pleased the Lord. I felt like that Jesus had said, "Suffer the little children to come to me," and he knew he was going to give them water. I'll give you water and you'll never thirst again. I'm talking about I'm going to give you some eternal water too. I'm going to give you water for life but I am the water of life. And this is what the missionaries tell these people. When they have given them water for life they point them to the water of life that inspired that giving mode. When you see the joy of those parents and those children, and looking at Betty, and I believe Jesus is smiling like he did when he saw those children. It was a very powerful verse, the joy of the Lord is our strength.

Can you imagine the strength we would gain if we were doing those things which gave our father and our savior joy? Betty, I want to live that way. I want to be a joy to the Lord. I want to put a smile on his face. I hope a lot of times he laughs with me and at me because he thinks I'm funny. But I'm going to tell you when he is so pleased that I'm doing what his son would do with his hands, if he was here, and he is in us.

But would you do this right now? Would you go on line right there or dial that number and take your bankcard and you make the greatest love gift you can make. If you can drill a well, Betty, we've got to have 188 emergency wells. We're going to drill 400 this year but we have an emergency right now. I mean we need like the fastest response we've ever had of people. A hundred people, they say, "I'll drill a well, \$4800." You can do it. You're there. You're one. You're one of those. Or you give portion of a well, \$1200, \$2400: Pray another joins or three join and we've got a well. But in addition to that, now I don't think there is a person watching, I don't care where you are, I don't care if you're living in challenging circumstances that you couldn't give a family one of those filters and that would be a little over \$30 because three families for 100 dollars, each one of them get their own filter system.

Would you very prayerfully and compassionately go on line or dial that number and you make the gift God put on your heart. We have some gifts to send you to say thank you. They'll bless you. Would you right now bless someone, put a smile not only on their face and their families but on our father's? Please do it. Thank you!

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

In the studio

Sheila: It's awesome! On that trip to Burundi the team actually split into two to do some filming. So some were filming with one area of the village and then Ralph was over with this crowd of children waiting to see what this strange looking contraption would actually do. The part of the team that were on the other side of the village suddenly heard this raucous, just like cheers. It was like the 4th of July. And everyone ran over and they realized because it was the first time that these children had seen water that they could see through.

I've been in these places in Africa and it is heartbreaking -- heartbreaking! Something as simple as clean water to give your child. I've watched what happens when the parents, when all they have is this filthy water. It is not just that it is dirty, it is disease-ridden, all sorts of diseases: Yellow fever. It is horrible!

So many mothers in Burundi and Angola and so many places in Africa have buried two, three children. I sat with a woman. She put her head on my shoulder and sobbed because she said, "I have two children left. What do I do? My choice is give them no water and they will die a horrible death or give them this water and realize that that might be what actually speeds their death on?"

But here's the great news. I've seen the difference it makes. Our goal at *LIFE* is 188 wells in 188 villages in Africa. The wonderful thing about these wells, we call it "water for life" because when we put a well in, you know it lasts for 70 years -- like the life of everyone in the village.

So for \$48 you can help 10 people. For \$144 you can help 30 people. But the last time I was in Angola we realized there was an area where it was quite high up and they couldn't drill a well. They simply can't get to the water. So when I heard about this water filtration system it's such

an answer! It is almost like a kidney dialysis machine. The water that comes out is crystal clear.

Would you join us in doing something? Do you know that for \$100 you provide that kind of kit that will give three families clean water? It's amazing and the joy and the tears on the mother's faces and the joy in the children's faces because they've never tasted anything like it. It is clean. It is full of life and health.

We can do something. We are not on this planet at this moment by accident. If you care at all, if you have a heart, if you love God, this is one of the most practical ways to show that we care. So would you do something now? Would you call that number on your screen? You can go online. But please, let's join together and you and I can give water for life!

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

End of clip

On the mission field

James: Just as we're giving water here in Southern Africa, we need to give water like this, a cup of water where there are contaminated water sources that are killing not only children but their entire families. Many children lose a parent because of some intestinal disease from contaminated water. And it may be that you can give a well. You can provide the entire cost or you could say I'll join another person or a couple of other people but I'm going to help.

I'm standing by the answer. I'm standing by the solution, a well I can operate very easily with one hand, any child can do it. You've got clean water coming here. And this is life -- this is life! That's what you're providing when you help us drill water wells and give these simple pumps that any child can work. Thank you for helping!

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Sometimes believers are known for what we stand against. Don't you think it would be great if in 2017 we became known as the people who did something?

For any gift at all, we would be glad to send you my book, *5 Minutes with Jesus: A Fresh Infusion of Joy*. But if you want to do the \$100 to provided that filtration kit for three families, we'll send you this beautiful canvas that says: "No greater name than the name of Jesus."

If you're able to give \$1200, we will send this beautiful eagle, "Determined Eagle." Those that wait on the Lord will renew their strength. But together we can do something. We can do something to build up the people in Africa who are desperately praying right now, "Lord Jesus, will you send someone to help?" And I want to say, "Lord, send me!"

Thanks for being with us! See you next time on *Wednesdays in the Word*.

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.