

4/5/17

Week 15: Mission: Rescue Life
Sheila Walsh: *Wednesdays in the Word*
The Shelter of God's Promises: Provision

Sheila: Hello! Welcome to *Wednesdays in the Word*. I'm Sheila Walsh and I'm so glad that you have joined us today. I wanted you to know that we can have like kind of a date, like every Wednesday that you and I agree to meet here and I promise you, that my heart is that I'll have studied and prayed and be able to share something with you that will be practical and real but always based on the word of God.

I love when the Psalmist, David said in Psalm 119: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. To me, that simply says that God's word will show us where we're standing, how to take the next step and where to go. I don't know if the Bible has been a big priority in your life but I really would encourage you to grab hold of a Bible and begin -- even if you just begin in John's gospel. John was one of Jesus' 12 closest friends; and he's probably the youngest and he really loved Jesus. You get such a beautiful picture of who Jesus is and was then through the eyes of this disciple who loved him so much. I really encourage you to make God's word part of your every single day life.

Well, we've been looking at some of the rich promises, over 3,000 in God's word. And the promise that we're going to look at today hits us at a very core level. Let me ask you a question. Do you ever wonder if you have enough -- - enough money to pay your bills, enough energy to get through the day, enough faith to make it through perhaps a difficult season?

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi he made this declaration in Chapter 4 verse 19. He said, "And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. It was quite a promise -- all your needs.

When our son Christian was about to turn five we were living in Nashville and we decided to throw him a birthday party and invite his kindergarten class. My father-in-law William had been living with us since the death of his wife Eleanor so he was very excited to be a part of planning this big party.

So we all sat down one morning at the breakfast table, each with our own copy of the local

parenting magazine, opened to the classified section at the back looking for something that might be a fun thing for the party. William suggested getting a clown but I wondered if that might be a little too creepy for some of the little ones. Barry suggested one of those jumpy inflatable castle things, which I thought was a good idea. But I'd also read about a guy from the local zoo who would bring a selection of small animals to a party and teach the children about them. Well, then Barry found an ad for a guy with two llamas; kind of like pony rides except llamas -- so llama rides.

Well, finally we narrowed it down to six possibilities. Barry said he would make inquiries and see what was available for the date we wanted and check on the price because I was worried that some of them might be very expensive. So I sent out the invitations and I ordered the cake and prayed for a sunny day. So Christian's birthday morning arrived and it was beautiful -- a warm sunny day. Perfect! The party was scheduled from 2:00 in the afternoon until five. And at 1:30 a van pulled into our driveway and the sign on the side said "Party inflatables." I thought, good choice, Barry! Christian will absolutely love this! So he ran outside beside himself with excitement as he saw this giant inflatable castle take shape.

William stationed himself at the front door to welcome our guests as they began to arrive and I showed the children and their moms into the backyard. Well, I heard William call my name with an edge of concern so I hurried to the front door. He pointed down the driveway where two girls stood holding the reigns of three ponies. Another girl was standing on the doorstep.

"Hi!" I said, "Are these for the Walsh party?"

She assured me that they were. So I led them around the side of the house to the backyard. As you can imagine, Christian and his friends are so excited. They all lined up to take turns riding the animals. Okay, I thought. So Barry booked the castle and the ponies. A bit much but you don't turn five every day of the week.

Well, then again, I heard it. "Sheila!" I arrived back at the front door in time to see Crackles the Clown arrive with a big red nose and a large horn.

"Are you here for the Walsh party?" I asked her.

She replied with one deafening honk.

Decided this might be the moment to ask Barry why half of Nashville's children party planners had now stationed themselves at our house. But I didn't get that far until I heard, "Sheila."

I was almost afraid to answer the call. William stood at the door looking as if a truck had hit him

as Jungle Jim from the Nashville Zoo began to unload his menagerie of small animals. Before I had a chance to ask him the obvious question, Penelope the face painter arrived. Now we officially had a three ring circus.

I'd love to tell you that the craziness ended there. But there was one more. I heard the front doorbell ring again and I seriously thought, I may never answer the front door again. I turned the knob very nervously and was greeted by a very stressed looking man who immediately apologized for being late. And behind him stood two huge llamas.

As the children filed out that day they one by one declared it was the best party they had ever attended. The mothers -- not so thrilled. "What are we supposed to do now for our parties?" One asked, "Book the space shuttle?"

I just muttered something about leaving it all up to Barry and I was sure I could promise them we will never have another party again.

When every last critter had been gathered up and every horn had been silenced I found Barry sitting in the den with his head in his hands. "What on earth was that?" I asked. "We just had 16 animals in our house and I'm not even counting the clown."

"I didn't mean to," he whispered. I said, "What do you mean you didn't mean to? Did they just volunteer their gifts?"

"No," Barry said, "I asked them all to hold the date until I decided which one I actually wanted and I forgot to get back to them."

"So which one had you actually booked?" I asked.

"The llamas," he replied, "just the llamas."

We looked at each other and fell on the floor laughing.

Well, none of the moms are speaking to me now but Christian sure had a great party. So on Christian's fifth birthday party my little family had way too much.

But honestly, like you, more often than not, there have been many more times when it was clear to us that we didn't have enough -- didn't have enough money, didn't have enough time, didn't have enough energy when we all felt stretched beyond our limits. I'm sure, pretty sure you've been there too. You might even find yourself there right now.

So let's take a look at our promise verse: And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

I'm a passionate believer in context and what I mean by that is understanding what was being said around a verse or a passage. It is easy to take a verse out of scripture and build a theology around it but not only is that usually poor theology, sometimes we actually miss the richness of what's being shared and what those listening would have understood.

So at the time of writing this letter, Paul is under house arrest in Rome and he is writing a letter to the church in Philippi, one of his favorite churches. He is deeply moved by their compassion for him. He's writing about a time when he was in great financial need and the Philippians sent financial help to him when he hadn't even asked for it. It was really clear to Paul that they had listened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and acted to fill the need that he was experiencing.

Now he's under house arrest and the Philippian church has sent a dear brother just to encourage Paul in prison. Paul thanks them for their kindness and for their financial support. They're the only church to send him a gift and it really moved him. He said his spirits had been lifted. He said he had been filled up and supplied to the point of overflowing. And now he is responding from that place with a sincere prayer for his friends to experience this same blessing: And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

He refers to their gift as a sweet-smelling offering to God. I love that. When you or I reach out to someone, when we see a need and we respond not only does it touch that person but do you know, it blesses God? The language that Paul uses here is serious. In the Old Testament the burnt offerings offered up to God were pleasing to him. Paul is comparing what the Philippian church did as the same kind of sacrifice given to God's servant for God's work is a gift to God, a first-class offering.

You can actually compare it. It's a similar meaning to Romans 12, verse one where Paul writes this: Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and pleasing to God. This is your true and proper worship. Our sacrificial giving is part of how we worship. God allows no offering to be made to him in vain; he misses nothing.

It is important to note that Paul refers to their need but he makes no mention of their desires. There is a chasm of difference between what we need and what our culture tells us we need, or even worse, "deserve." Our culture will tell us, if you listen to commercials, you deserve stuff. We stand before a God who provides for our needs. Have you noticed that when God supplies what we need it's profoundly satisfying? But when we decide to just reach out for what we want it never quite fulfills us. We're always left feeling as if we want more.

I love how C.S. Lewis describes what we settle for. Listen to this. He writes this in the weight of glory: It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he can't imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday by the ocean.

C.S. Lewis writes: We are far too easily pleased.

God wants so much more for us. This promise here is that God, our Father knows our every need and will provide way beyond what we can rightly expect. He gives out of his riches, not ours. Ours are limited but his -- limitless.

Perhaps you rolled out of bed today and your thoughts quickly went to what you don't have. Financial hardship has affected so many of us. Some have had months of unemployment; perhaps you've even lost your home. You're exhausted and discouraged. All of us, if we're honest, sit here aware that we lack something. And most of us are pretty sure we don't have quite enough to do this life on our own.

If that's you, I want to say to you, rejoice that you know you don't have enough. That may sound crazy but it is the place where Jesus wants us. His name is Jehovah Jireh, which means: My provider. He wants us to know his promise to take care of us; and that we cannot do it on our own, all of us will come up short. I think the most dangerous place to be is the place where you think, I don't really need God to survive. I've got everything under control.

The very first place in scripture that we read the term Jehovah Jireh is in Genesis 22, a story most of us are pretty familiar with. And to be honest, it is a story I've struggled with a lot. It's a story of the ultimate test that Abraham will ever have to go through. Remember when God asks him to take his son, Isaac and sacrifice him on the top of the mountain as a burnt offering?

I found this story hard to wrap my heart around before I had a son; it's much more difficult after Christian was born. I questioned God, why would you ask him to do that? But as I began to study this promise that God will supply all our needs I felt the Holy Spirit say, "Sheila, take another look at that story." So I did. I'd always imagined that at that point when Abraham and Isaac are going up the mountain that Isaac was a young boy. But most biblical scholars agree that Isaac at this point is between 20 and 30 years old. And what that tells us, there is no way that Abraham, who would have been at that point either 120 or 130 years of age, there was no way he could have forced a man in his prime to lie down to be tied on an altar. Abraham must have said to Isaac, "Isaac, lie down."

And Isaac must have responded, "Yes father."

Why? Why would Abraham ask it and why would Isaac do it?

Well, by this point in his life, God had a track record with Abraham and Abraham knew, he knew as deep as the marrow in his bones that God is not man that he should lie. God had told him that through this boy, Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. And Abraham believed God.

I find it interesting that Abraham said, "The boy and I will go up to worship and then we will come back down."

Worship? As I've thought and prayed over it, that choice of word, it's clear to me that sometimes the greatest act of worship is to be willing to put our dreams to death to embrace God's plan. Abraham knew, even if he had to put a dagger in his son's heart, God was able to raise him from the dead. So in complete confidence, although I'm sure with agony in his heart, Abraham lifted up his arm and God stopped him.

I want to read just a couple of verses from Genesis 22. I'm reading at verse 12: "Don't lay a hand on the boy," an angel said. "Don't hurt him in any way for now I know that you truly fear God. You've not withheld from me even your son, your only son."

Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. Abraham named the place Yahweh Jireh, which means the Lord will provide. To this day people still use that name as a proverb: On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.

When I read that, do you know what I remember? There was another hill where another son walked up the hill and didn't get to come back again. Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God walked up into the hill of Calvary and there we see what it looks like. There we see what Jehovah Jireh looks like, the Lord will provide. In Christ he provided the ultimate sacrifice. He is a source of everything. He is the source for salvation. He is the source for our daily bread. Whatever you are going through right now, whatever you need is found in Christ. God didn't hold back his only son. He gave everything so that you and I can have everything.

Don't settle for what this culture tells you you need. You find everything you want in relationship with God. One of the great privileges of being a child of God is we get to look out and see where there is genuine need, and because of what Christ has done for us, we get to say, "Let me tell you about a God who wants to untie where you find yourself laying right now." Watch this.

On the mission field

Sheila: Honestly, it's overwhelming. My first night here I got... I went back to my hotel room and I just cried because I thought, Lord, I can't believe this! I can't believe that this is happening!

It's just like this spiritual battle between good and evil and evil is making a lot of money over there. You walk along the street and these girls are all dressed up in their makeup and short skirts. And it gets darker and darker. And you go back further and you see these little rooms and the locks are not on the inside to keep a girl safe, the locks are on the outside to keep a girl trapped.

As I looked at these doors knowing that behind these doors are girls that are being held against their will or their will is so broken down, it was so clear to me, we have got to be the answer to their prayers, to some who have given up hope, to some who don't even think there is any other way to live because they've been told, if you escape we know where you live and we'll go get your family.

We need to be the answer. In Jesus' name, it's all about freedom. It is about hearing chains break. Isn't it interesting that it was a slave trader who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace."
I once was lost but now I'm found; was blind and now I see.

Let's do that in Jesus' name.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I find it so interesting that in the book of Isaiah we read this: Help those who are in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. We find that in Isaiah 58, verse ten.

There is so much in scripture that helps us understand and remember that life is not just about us. It is not just that we are saved so we can sit here and wait until Jesus gets us out of here. If you still have a pulse, you still have a purpose. We are here to make a difference. It's not something we have to do; it is the joy that we get to do this.

Can you imagine what it's like to go to somebody who is literally being held in a prison and say, "You know what? We're here to rescue you." That's the kind of people we work with. They go into the darkest places. So many of these places, it is just such evil. It is run by organized crime and they'll take a little girl and make as much as \$200,000 a year. They make her sleep with 20-30 men a night and she is a child. She should be in school. She should be playing with her

dolls.

But I've also seen the difference it makes when those children are reached and then rescued, and I've seen how they can be restored. Somebody asked me after my trip, "Don't you think too much damage has been done?" Absolutely not! The word *salvation*, *sozo* means to save and to heal, to make whole. I have seen the way that God has invaded the darkness and saved these young girls and boys and is now making them whole.

I firmly believe some of these young people are going to grow up to be mighty servants of God in our nations but there is more -- there is so many more waiting, waiting to be rescued. Our goal for this year is 5,000. We want to see 5,000 young girls and boys brought out of darkness into light and we can do it. It is so doable if we'll all do something.

My son Christian who's 20 is on a particularly limited budget as a student. He's like, "But Mom, I can do something. If we just don't do pizza on a Friday night I can do something."

We have some amazing friends of the ministry here and they have said, "We will match gifts given up to \$200,000." Which simply means if you're able to give \$64 that's immediately doubled to \$128 and that's enough to rescue one child and bring them to a place of safety. Help them understand, when you cried out in the darkness, God heard your prayer and he sent help. If you can do more, \$128 will now be doubled and you'll be able to help two children. There is so much we can do. People are waiting. We have incredible people working there simply waiting for our help.

So would you go to your phone? Would you call us now? Even if you can't do much would you do something because when we all do something we can literally change the world?

Begin video clip

Announcer: Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, their spirit and body broken under horrific emotional and physical abuse. Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to save children vulnerable to sex traffickers. You can help rescue those already enslaved and you can help restore their lives and give them a future.

Now a generous opportunity of a \$200,000 matching gift means your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child will be matched to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift we will send you James Robison's new book, *Living Amazed*: How divine encounters can change your life. As you read these inspiring stories you'll learn how to live amazed in the presence of God 24 hours a day.

With your gift of \$100 or more you'll receive James's new book, along with the companion Amazed Journal so you can record accounts in your own life where you're amazed at God's goodness.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help rescue 20 children and you may request our beautiful new "Determined Eagle" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today.

End of clip

On the mission field

Lisa: These children are absolutely beautiful! They are filled with families that love them. Now they're poor -- and just because they're poor it puts them at terrible risk for being taken, for being kidnapped, for being trafficked, and forced into labor or sex trafficking. And if they get taken, nobody is going to know where to find them and people can't go after them and look for them.

We don't want to see that happen. Friends for life is building a network with partners around the world so that children in these kinds of conditions don't get trafficked, don't get taken away from their families. Won't you partner with us? I want you to pray and ask God what he would have you do. I want you to pick up your phone. I want you to go online and I want you to be a part of the Friends for Life to partner for rescue.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! I've been teaching from my book, *The Shelter of God's Promises*. I'd love to send that to you for any gift. Also, we have James' amazing new book, *Living Amazed*. This will really change how you see your life.

But please, if you tried to get through and the phones were busy, would you keep going? It makes a difference. I promised our partners, we're going to get the help you need to see those young boys and girls brought out of darkness into light. We can do it together. It's one of the

greatest privileges as a believer that we don't get caught up in all of this stuff of this world that won't satisfy but we live as God's sons and daughters and we change the world in Jesus' name.

'Til the next time, God bless you!