

7/31/17
Week 32: WFL
Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh
Bobbie Houston

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with us. Appreciate you being here. This is going to be a very special show. We have, all the way from Sydney, Australia, Hillsong Church, Ms. Bobbie Houston. Thank you so much for being here.

Bobbie: Thank you! I bet you were clearly missed!

Sheila: I know, we like that. Honestly, it is such an honor, Bobbie to have you here. I think when I look around the world it seems to me that God has placed certain women around the world with a very particular anointing and a bigger vision, that see a bigger picture. Because even though we know you're from Hillsong/Sydney and then all the other churches, you have a heart that is so much bigger than that. I think that's why you've written this amazing book called, *Stay the Path*.

But for those who know all the amazing things that God is doing now, did you ever see that when you were starting off? Did you ever think that God was going to do this much through your life?

Bobbie: Absolutely never. But I just want to say it is a real pleasure and honor to be here. I love hanging with you guys and having fellowship with you like before tonight. It feels like family, which is awesome.

But to your question, never -- never in a million years! I don't think I have that capacity. I just wasn't one of those girls who like dreamed big and desired to be this, this, or that. So for me, no, this is all a beautiful surprise which is the nature of God; isn't it to surprise us?

Sheila: You tell this really interesting story in the book about a time when all these women leaders, you're at a conference and the women leaders come forward for prayer and you are at the far end and suddenly, you're singled out. Tell us about that.

Bobbie: It was amazing. I open with that story for some reason because I had gone to this women's retreat out in the countryside, about 200 women gathered. I really should have been there because Brian was actually leading our movement at that time. So I don't know why I

wasn't there. Circumstances changed, I went. It was an lady called Kathy Lichener, who is amazing, strong prophetic gift upon her. That aside, she called all the ladies to come forward.

She was down at the other end, like I was down at this end, eyes closed, heart heavenward as always, and then suddenly she is breathing in my face because she came all the way and she started with me. She really just started to speak things over us that arrested the audience because they knew our ministry. But she had no idea, began to speak things like, "You haven't seen anything yet, woman of God." And began to articulate the ministry and articulate things that nobody would know. Talked about paving a way, and laboring, and doing the things that you do in ministry. I will never forget it. She spoke profound words about my husband. It was a pivotal moment, when God singles you out or decides to go, hey you know what? I've got your life mapped. I'm going to encourage you. So I chose to open the book with that story.

Sheila: It's a beautiful story and I think it's interesting that you call it *Stay the Path* as opposed to wow, this is a great path because there are going to be some seasons when it is not so easy to stay on the path.

Bobbie: Yeah, totally. I just think everyone needs a revelation that we actually are on a path or a pilgrimage or a journey through life. For me, that conviction rings loud, Sheila, because I'm a mum, I'm a grandmother these days.

Sheila: Do you see she said mum? I love that! Mum, not mom.

Bobbie: Well, I had to spell it both ways for my children because I've got five grandchildren growing up here in America.

But I am, I'm a mother, I'm a grandmother, I'm a pastor. We have a vast congregation of beautiful people young and old. I thought at this time in my life, opportunity presented. I was like okay, if my journey could add anything to their journey, if my distance could add anything and save them maybe a trip to hell and back or fast track them through certain terrain then by the grace of God I'm going to try to ascribe something to that end. That's really the heart of the book. The bottom line is there is a path and it's too beautiful and it's too powerful and it's too precious to compromise.

Randy: I think a lot of people look at ministry, successful ministries, I mean Hillsong is huge. We all know it. A lot of people probably are tempted to think that God just opened the way and y'all just walked right down that path and everything; flowers bloomed and children sang and all that good stuff. What are specifically, maybe one example of an obstacle, a time where you had to decide whether you were going to *Stay the Path* or not?

Bobbie: Oh, my gosh! We're talking about a lot of years, Randy.

Sheila: Like, how long have you got?

Randy: Just one example.

Bobbie: It's a given and I think it is known for people who watch our world and if you read Brian's book, *Live Love Lead*. Being on the front line of anything, and I feel like we are, with many others on the front line of "they kingdom come," and the advancement of his church and seeing the local church prosper and be who she can be.

So that comes with territory. So we have faced a very real season, it was a very long season of immense media aggression where you can't expect a secular world to always understand the things of God. So that was a very large season in our life and it came with many layers. It was fierce at times. There were, if I'm honest, there were times when you think, wow, is this worth it? But you're always reminded, of course, it is!

I kind of have this thing, I think, wow, Jesus said that there would be persecution, there would be opposition, so let's realize that. But right now they're not throwing us to the lions so really, how hard is this to stand up for your faith and stand up for your convictions and press on and continue to labor to see the body of Christ be who she can be? Not because we're anything so special, so clever, but God has graced our church and he has put a favor and the kiss of heaven upon it.

We love the local church and one of our mandates as a local church is to champion the cause of local church. Everything that we do, our conferences, those major more global imprint things are to that end. We want to see the body of Christ in her diversity and her beauty become who God knows she can be.

Randy: I realize you weren't literally thrown to the lions but metaphorically, you guys pretty much were. I'm just curious personally because I know there are a lot of places you can go to that. You can go to a ministry that God has given you, you can go to local church, you can go to friends, you can go to scripture, what in particular really gave you the most sustenance through the hard times?

Bobbie: I got saved at 15 and I got radically saved. I fell in love with Jesus. So I know this sounds too perfect an answer -- [Laughing] but I've learned to look up. So I do, I draw my strength from God. I remind myself to look upwards. So even when Brian was struggling and he speaks quite openly about that, the many years and all the layers compounded upon his soul. His soul realm was struggling and yet he never stopped leading our church, he never stopped being the stoic leader that he is. But in that time, he wasn't even there in some sense for me. I felt

like alone in that. Do you know what? It presses you to your knees and it presses you to look upwards and you actually find an inner strength that you didn't know that you had.

I think that's remarkable. And I think all our journeys are different. God is growing to teach us his ways and his goodness in many different ways. So my struggle might look different to yours or the challenge that you face might be different to another person yet I honestly believe that at the end of the day, if we all push through in him, amen? We're going to learn the same bottom line; that God is faithful, that he is always there, that there is always a pathway for it no matter how depressing or sad or hopeless it might look. There is always a path forward and that Jesus is that way. And if we keep following him and keep our eyes on him, we're actually not going to go wrong.

Sheila: But there is a lot of wisdom too in what you share about you have a quote from *Pilgrim's Progress*, which I love. For you remind people on the journey that even though there is an enemy that prowls around like a roaring lion, you remind from that book, the lions are chained. There is only so much that they're allowed to do.

Bobbie: That book is so impacting. I think every modern day current Christian alive today should read that afresh because there's so much wisdom in it. Again, there is a lion in there that's like, you're safe while you stay in the center of the path. In other words, stay in the center of what God's will is for you, what you know to be God's will and he will not lead you astray. Do you know what I'm saying? It's like sometimes, believers or Christians get fearful that they're going to miss the mark or they're going to whatever. I'm like, God's too kind for that. If you've got a heart after him, he'll take care of you. He'll watch over you.

Sheila: One of the things I love, I've had the privilege of being part of Colour Conference.

Bobbie: And we love you there!

Sheila: But the thing I love about that, Bobbie is your heart for younger girls, and yet you have this place for seasoned women -- I'm calling myself seasoned! Not older, seasoned! But I love that. I love the fact that you bring together, we're sisterhood and we're staying the path together. I think was that intentional when you started Colour?

Bobbie: I don't know if it was never intentional but I learned it very fast, I learned it at the first Colour. Because back in that day, 21 years ago for me, women's ministry was something for your mothers or your aunties or your grandmothers; right? I was in my late 30s but even then I was like women's ministry, what the heck is that?

Sheila: It involved a lot of Tupperware back then.

Bobbie: Yeah! So there was this mind-set that needed to be broken. I knew it could be broken and I knew it needed to be broken even in our context.

I think again, I always come back to the analogy of family for the church, for the body of Christ. So a healthy family has a mum, dad, siblings, aunties, there's a plethora of age and experience there. I know that's a beautiful metaphor ideal but it is how God created it and I think that's how the church should be. So we broke the back of that mind-set, that young and older couldn't actually be together on Colour One.

Then there's this beautiful, if I can quote it correctly, oh my gosh, help me. But like the definition of generation is everybody drawing breath at the same time. So even when you think about succession and passing the baton on, whatever that means, it doesn't mean that you pass the baton on and then maybe retire. If you're going to retire that's fine, but I think we ought to *Stay the Path* until the path is done. We all have something to contribute and I think that's -- I know our church is not perfect by any means but it is actually a beautiful example of the plethora family, spiritual family doing life together.

Randy: I want to ask. You're going to like this question.

Sheila: Okay, go for it!

Bobbie: Am I going to like this question, though?

Randy: I feel confident. It is your decision so. Another barrier you guys have kind of broken down in a lot of ways is the gender barrier. You put women in very prominent roles of leadership. Is that intentional? What sort of thing is that?

Bobbie: It's just been natural for us, in all truthfulness. It's been natural. It's a big question and it's a big question for huge pockets of the body of Christ. And it is a question that I actually brought to the table and I tried to bring it in a really sensitive, gracious manner, even at this Colour Conference because it is such a big one. It is a big issue like socially, culturally, and even religiously. But I can only share from our experience and I'm married to a man who is the greatest releaser of people, men and women. He's always said -- obviously, we're all under submission, we're all under the mission of God, we're all working together. If you go back to origin, for us, it's men and women together. And he said to them, together. I think the enemy has really sought to corrupt that and contain the goal that is within the feminine heart.

So part of that greater message on the Colour Conferences is to break down some of that barrier. For us, it's natural. It's a natural ebb and flow. I think Brian was releasing women before he even

knew he was releasing women.

Sheila: That's what I love about it, it is a natural, it is not a forced thing. It's recognizing the hand of God on someone's life and supporting that.

But even with my son, when my son was Christian was I think 17, he came with me to Colour Conference in Sydney and the impact it had on him has continued because now he says, "I get it, mom. We're on mission 24/7. It's not like I go to church on Sunday or I go to something Wednesday night," it is like that was what he got from -- and I think that I loved was he's just this young kid from the states, nobody really knows him but the way that the older guys gathered around him, made him feel welcome. It was amazing -- Joel and Carl and all these guys.

Bobbie: Really? Oh I love that!

Sheila: They just made him feel like, hey dude! You belong. You're a part of it us. I think that's just -- I think that's what the world is longing to see. A faith that is so real that it penetrates every cell 24/7.

Randy: So for the women who maybe haven't been to a Colour Conference or maybe they're not going to get to go to one soon, what is that core message that you would want to speak to them?

Bobbie: Well, I think, well, the very core message is that of placing value upon womanhood. So how layered is that? That has breath to that woman who desires to be in ministry or finds herself in ministry, and the value that she brings to the table; right through to placing value on women in impoverished situations where culturally they are assailed and abused and live so far beneath God's original intent.

So that is the core message of Colour. It is to love God, it is to love and champion women within the local church because again, we're passionate about the planting, we're passionate about what women can bring to the table. They gather, they come to me but I send them away. Sheila will vouch for this. I send them away hopefully more in love with the Lord, more in love with their local church, more in love and wanting to serve their local pastors.

Over the years, 21 years now in Australia, really, the body of Christ trusts me. It's not just one part of the body of Christ, it's really every denomination and every aspect of the diverse -- in church, they come and it's felt. I can't measure that ripple effect but it has had an effect. And you know what? It's not so much about me, it's actually about how lovely God is and his heart for humanity and the feminine heart, because it's created in his image and it's beautiful. I think the church limps, society limps when that feminine heart is actually not present. It limps.

Sheila: I remember after the first Colour Conference because there was two in Sydney. And I was in the mall looking for something for my dogs. I was looking to see if I could bring something home.

Bobbie: Of course, you were -- those fluffy dogs that sleep on your head!

[Laughter]

Sheila: Yes! But actually, there is a store in one of those malls in Sydney that sells toys for your dogs because I got an alligator and something else.

But as I came out, these two women who looked like they were my mum's age said, "We were at Colour One and it's probably the first time that we really grasped that it is not too late for us to be everything that God's called us to be."

I'm thinking, this is not a 17-year old, this isn't a 30-year old, this is somebody who is probably in their late 70s who came and felt welcomed and felt the presence of Christ and thought, you know what? I'm going to flourish where I am right now. And I think that's the beautiful presence of Christ that changes everything.

Bobbie: That's a good aim.

Sheila: Yes! Awesome!

Randy: I'll end this by saying something quite controversial.

Sheila: Oh, not like you!

Randy: If they have to edit it out, they have to edit it out.

[Laughter]

I have found that the men who have a problem with women and insist that they submit, they have a problem submitting to God. I found that the men who truly submit to God have no problem lifting women up.

Sheila: There's a T-shirt!

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Randy: I appreciate, not just what you're doing but how you're doing it because you're not doing it with any sort of spite towards men. You're just lifting people up.

Bobbie: But I think that same point of thing is how it's done because there is a militant voice rising up even in recent months; like a militant, "give us our rights." And I'm like -- it disturbs me a little bit. Like I believe in women's rights, I believe in all these things but I'm like, gosh, I'm not sure that within the body of Christ this is actually how we go about it. I really don't. That's my personal opinion.

Sheila: I completely agree with you. It's like I was reading something today that Charles Spurgeon said, "If you want to find your rights in this world then go to the cross and die daily." Because we're supposed to be servants of all.

[Applause]

The other thing that was very impactful for me about Colour was that not only did these women come together and receive from Christ, but there was this mandate, this mission to now reach out. And that's always been a part of Colour, it's always been part of Hillsong, to look to where there is a need. That's why we're very excited to show you something; a phenomenal opportunity right now that we have not just to bring the word of Christ to people, but to bring the water of life to people. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Announcer: If you had a choice of these sources of water to drink from, which would it be? For most people it would seem obvious, choose the one that looks clean and inviting. A disturbing fact is that millions of people do not have the same choice because they live in areas where clean, safe water sources do not exist. The devastating consequences of having to drink from unsafe water sources can be seen in the faces of mothers who have lost children to sicknesses and disease caused by waterborne illnesses.

Open Captions:

>> As the leader of this village can you please help put in a water well because it would stop the sickness and disease here.

Announcer: We have the opportunity to offer another choice, a choice that would provide the greatest blessing, the blessing of life.

Ralph: These three siblings, they fight the daily elements, the dryness, the dangers of the river here and all that encompasses. They even lost one of their own brothers who drowned in this river out here.

We can bring change though by drilling a well, bringing water of life that will bring life change to this village. By God's grace we will see that very soon.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: One thing he said, we all know that the water there is awful and there's a lot of waterborne illnesses out of that water but that particular roll-in, there is a shot of a boy holding a slingshot. I know when both of us saw it the first time we thought, okay, he's having fun down at the river because that's the way I think.

He is not having fun. If you watch, that kid is standing guard over his sister because it is not just bad water, there are critters in that water, there are snakes that have come up and taken those kids away. So when they go down there, there are alligators or crocodiles, I believe.

Sheila: They have crocodiles and they have anacondas.

Randy: Oh tell me about it. How horrible is that? So they don't just have to worry about the water they can get. They have to worry about their lives getting the bad water. So I look at that and I think, my goodness! It is easy enough to go in and solve the water problem. When we partner with people like you, we go in and we drill a well.

And in some cases where it is an emergency or hard to get to, we'll give them that water filtering bucket and we say, "Okay, here's clean water for you to drink" and it solves so many problems. But in some of those areas we're solving not just a water problem we're solving -- I don't know what you call it -- a life and death situation with the environment.

Sheila: I asked one mother if I could go with her in Angola to where she goes every day. I followed her and her two darling little girls. We walked for a long, long way and they had bare feet. Then we came to this waterhole and I was horrified as I watched these little children put their bare feet into this water, and thinking what they could even get from just their bare feet being exposed to the water.

And the mum got this bucket and it was just so full of filthy water and I said to her, "What do

you do with it when you get back?"

She said, "I just wait for the dirt to settle to the bottom."

Not realizing that the disease is in the water. And the thing is, this is so doable. We can fix this. For those of us who have been given so much, it's not like God says, you've got to give back. What a gift, what a privilege it is to be able to say to mothers tonight in Africa, and all parts of the world who are laying their heads down faithfully saying, "Father, please will you provide clean water for my children?" And we can do this. I have seen the difference.

Our goal this year, Randy, is to put in 400 water wells -- new water wells. And for \$48, which isn't much, you can provide clean water for ten people. Some of you can do more. Do you know that for \$4800 you can drill a whole well? That's what my husband, Barry and I do for each other for Christmas. We think, I do not need one more pair of boots. We can actually put a water well in and save lives.

Would you help us? Because if we all do something we can change everything for some of these people. So please go to your phone, dial the number on your screen and just do what you can. Thank you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children living in extreme poverty are forced to make a dreadful choice: Drink polluted water filled with deadly disease or perhaps die of thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is there is a solution. **Mission:** Water for Life is one of the most proven and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything!

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 15 nations. A gift of \$48 will provide disease-free water for ten people, \$72 will provide for 15 people, and \$144 will help provide clean water straight from the ground for 30 people.

Please also consider an additional gift of \$100 to help provide three families with water filtration kits in emergency areas where our drilling rigs are unable to reach. As our thank you, we'll send you the books, *Words of Jesus* and *Words of Healing*. One contains only the words of Jesus and the other scriptures for healing in your body, mind, and soul. With your \$100 gift you can receive both hardbound and softbound editions of these scripture promise books.

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 hand sculpted "Determined Eagle" bronze. Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

Randy: Many of these precious children behind me have lost siblings, playmates to waterborne illnesses. We can stop that cycle of death. It is as simple as giving them a cup of clean drinking water.

You know each water well will serve about an average of 1,000 people. Look at all these kids behind me. We can reach into areas, this area and so many more just like it, and save thousands of lives.

I pray you'll do what you can right now. Go to the phone, go online, make the best gift you can. When you do, know that you will be saving precious lives. Join with us as we reach into villages all around the world with water for *LIFE*.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: Thank you for partnering with us. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the life and love of Jesus Christ in very practical ways. Continue to go to the phone, continue to go online and do the best that you can.

Sheila: And for any gift you send in, we're going to send you Bobbie's amazing book. It is called, *Stay the Path*. It is a book for every single person. It will encourage you. It will challenge you. It will make you realize again why it is worth staying the path because God is good and he is for you.

Pastor Bobbie Houston, thank you so much! We love you!

Bobbie: I love you more! Thank you so much for having me as your guest. Thank you.

Randy: All our thanks to Hillsong, the entire Hillsong family.

All our best to you. We appreciate you joining us on *LIFE Today* each and every day. Don't forget to visit LifeToday.org and set your D.V.R. so you never miss a single show. Thank you!