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Week 32: WFL
Wednesdays in the Word
Sheila Walsh
The Storm Inside: From Disappointment to Hope

Sheila: Hi! I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *Wednesdays in the Word*. Thanks so much for spending time. I love it. So many of you have written to me on Facebook and said, "I look forward to this. I put it on my calendar. It is like a regular date. It encourages me."

I'm really grateful and just know that those of us here, it's quite an amazing staff; you usually just get to meet a few of us like James and Betty and Randy and myself, but there's a huge staff of people here who love you and are praying for you. It their commitment, their heart is that these programs, that they make a difference in your life; they remind you that in the midst of difficult circumstances that Christ is our hope.

That's what I want to talk to you about today. I want to talk about moving from disappointment to hope. If you'd asked me to pick an adjective that might ultimately lead to hope, I wouldn't naturally gravitate to disappointment because really, if you think about it, disappointment seems to be almost the antithesis of hope.

Before I started writing and teaching on disappointment, I sat down and I read through well over 200 letters I've received from women just over the last few months and the word *disappointment* came up a lot. Things like: "I wish I would have taken care of my mom and been there for her until she died. I'm so disappointed in myself. I let her down. My greatest struggle is disappointment in myself."

Another lady: "The bottom line is this, I'm really disappointed in the way my life has turned out."

Someone else wrote, "I'm bitterly disappointed in my failure as a mother. I don't think I'm a good mom."

Somebody else wrote, "I'm heartbroken and disappointed in what it is like to be a pastor's wife. I thought it would be different."

Several people wrote things like this. I'm just picking one: "I'm so disappointed that everything I taught my daughter/my son about the love of God seems to have made no difference."

One woman wrote, "My daughter is now in jail because of her addiction. I'm so deeply disappointed and how unfulfilled I feel in my life."

One woman wrote, "In spite of being a Christian leader and other people looking to me."

Honestly, those are just a few of the comments I read. Of all the issues that seem to hound us as women, disappointment seems to be one of the most debilitating. For some, disappointment is so bitter that it has completely drained the future of any hope. There are situations that feel so bleak, so final that we actually believe I'll never really hope again.

Have you ever been there? You might even be there right now. The truth is, the level of disappointment we experienced is measured by how much hope we've invested in the situation. Like if you show up for a movie, for an example, and you didn't think it was going to be that great, you're not going to be very disappointed if indeed it is a poor movie. But if however you're in the middle of one of the worst storms of your life and you're begging God to calm the storm and he doesn't, that can lead to pretty devastating disappointment.

Let me ask you to take just a moment and reflect on your life. Where do you think that you are experiencing the greatest disappointment? Maybe it's gone on for so long that you can't even imagine not being disappointed or rediscovering hope. So our question for our time today is this, how -- how do we move from that darkest night of disappointment to the profound hope that the word of God promises -- promises those of us who trust him?

And another question: Is it possible that God actually uses the disappointments we face every day to lead us to our ultimate hope which is found only in him?

As we look into God's word in this session we're going to take a look at a woman who experienced not just profound disappointment, not just for a season but year after year. But in her story she found redemption and hope that nothing in life could shake by reaching out and touching Jesus. I honestly believe that hope is available to every one of us.

We find our story in Mark's gospel. But we don't even know this woman's name. She is simply referred to as "a woman in the crowd." If you have your Bibles and you like to follow along, open them to Mark Chapter five and I'm going to begin reading at verse 25. So let's read the story of this woman who moved from crushing disappointment to overwhelming hope.

I read from the New Living Translation: 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'd spent everything she had to pay them but she had gotten no 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 could just touch his robe I will be healed.

Well, immediately, the bleeding stopped and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition. Jesus, realizing 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.

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

There is no doubt this is a miraculous story. But what I want us to see though is the greatest miracle she received that day wasn't even the one she was looking for because she didn't know she needed it. She wanted to be healed. She wanted the bleeding to stop but Jesus -- Jesus wanted to make her whole.

The glorious thing about the grace of God seen in the face of Christ Jesus is that he sees beyond our cries to the very deepest longing of our hearts. And he answers prayers; we don't even have the wisdom to pray if we will wait on him.

There are several things to note about this poor woman. First of all, she is suffering. The first thing we read about that woman is that her bleeding has been constant for 12 years. But in modern days, modern medicine is a condition called menorrhagia. I have a friend, a school teacher who has suffered from this for two years. She is so weak and easily worn out. If she gets up too quickly from her chair she can pass out. It is a very debilitating condition.

Well, the woman we read about has been like that for 12 years. Mark tells us she has used up every penny she had in an attempt to find a cure; and not only is she no better, she is actually worse.

Interestingly, in those days the Talmud offered 11 remedies that might bring relief. Most of them seem very bizarre to us today. Example, one treatment said this: If you can find a corn husk in the droppings of a white she mule and carry it around with you, that might help your condition. I'm not sure I would go for that option.

But she is really desperate. She is also an outcast. To me that seems worse. Most of us are familiar with the Ten Commandments -- the big ten -- but there are actually 613 laws that apply to every Jewish man, woman, and child. And the one that impacted this woman the most is found in Leviticus Chapter 15. It says this: If a woman has a flow of blood for many days that is unrelated to her menstrual period or if the blood continues beyond the normal period, she is ceremonially unclean.

Think through what life must have been like for this woman. What did it mean to be an outcast in biblical times?

Well, if she's been married she can no longer touch her husband; even to hold his hand would be to make him unclean. So I imagine she was living alone. I'm sure she was unable to have children. If you were her friend, you couldn't invite her over for coffee because the chair she sat on would be unclean as would the cup she used. If you saw her and she began to slip and fall in the street, anyone who knew of her condition would not be able to stop her fall. She was obliged by law to call out "Unclean!" If someone was about to bump into her and hadn't seen her. She was an absolute -- absolute outcast. She was not even welcome in the house of God. Utterly, completely alone.

Well, she was also desperate. Someone once told me this: When the pain of remaining the same is greater than the pain of change, then you're ready to change. I think that's where she was -- desperate.

She had heard that this man Jesus was healing people and she knew that this was her chance. I think it's amazing that she still had faith. She still hoped. Even as she determined she would push through the crowd and touch the hem of his garment, something happened that might ruin it all.

A prominent Jewish rabbi, Jairus fell at Jesus' feet on behalf of his 12-year old daughter. Interesting! She suffered for 12 years, this was a 12-year old girl who is dying. He begged Jesus to go with him to his home. This girl was everything this woman was not. She was loved, she was fought for, treasured, she was Jairus' daughter not just a woman in the crowd.

This was a crossroads for this woman. Would she slip away one more time even more bitterly disappointed? Or would she push through the crowd and her fear and her disappointment and touch Jesus?

I think we all have moments like that. Moments where we hear God calling us, calling us out of that place where we think, I'm alone, nobody cares, I'm abandoned. We know it is his voice. We know he's asking us, "Come on, step out in faith." Will we respond? It is so much easier sometimes to just slip away into the shadows and God lets us choose.

Well, in that moment, with her heart pounding in her chest, I'm sure, she stepped toward Jesus, reached through the crowd and touched the hem of his garment and immediately she felt it in her body, she was healed! And Jesus felt it too. He felt power had gone out of him. And he stopped and he asked the question, "Who touched me?"

The disciples thought the question was ridiculous. The crowd was pressing in on him from every side but Jesus waited because he knew this. Many people touched him that day but one person touched him in faith. Jesus, he knew who had touched him but he wasn't going to expose her. He waited.

Here's the thing. She could have slipped away unnoticed and presented herself to the priest in seven days and been declared clean. Nobody else would have known what she had done. But I wonder, would she have lived the rest of her life wondering if she had stolen a miracle? Would she have wondered if she had made Jesus unclean?

This is what we read in the gospel of Mark. That the woman, knowing what had happened to her came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. The Greek word used for "fall down" is the same word used just a few verses before her story in Mark five when a demon-possessed man fell at the feet of Jesus. The interpretation here is not simply of tripping or collapsing, but a falling in worship -- humility, full of belief and understanding of her need for a healer.

She told him the whole truth. That simple statement makes me stop in my tracks every time I read it -- the whole truth. Have you ever done that? Have you ever pulled out every ounce of the disappointment that you carry? Christ will listen. He listened to her. I'm sure that Jairus and others were trying to get him to move on because his daughter was dying. But Jesus stayed and he listened to this poor woman pour out the disappointment of all the years.

Then he gave her a gift given to no other person recorded in scripture. He looked at her and he called her, "Daughter." What a gift to this lonely, broken woman who had not belonged anywhere in a long, long time! And Jesus said, "You belong with me. You're family."

Jesus told her to go in peace; that her faith had made her whole. She could have slipped away but would she have gone in peace? Now Christ himself owned her. Before the whole community, he declared that her faith had saved her and sent her home in peace. Many translations say, "Go in peace and be healed."

But the minute she touched the edge of Christ's garment the bleeding stopped so what else needed to be healed? So much more. I believe she needed to be healed of all the tapes that had

played in her head over and over again. I think she needed to be healed of the shame and the bitter disappointment. I think she needed to be healed of the self-hatred that the enemy must have used to just torment her night and night.

When we limit salvation to that single act of commitment we make to Christ, we miss the beauty and depth of every day salvation. The Greek word for salvation is “sozo,” which means to save and to heal. He wants nothing less for every one of us. He wants nothing less for you. Christ's work in our lives is an ongoing process as he exposes the places where we're broken, where we've lost hope and invites us to bring that to him.

Let me ask you just one more time. Have you ever told Jesus the whole truth? Have you told him about things that you've pushed deep into the cellar of your soul hoping that you'd never have to look at them again? Have you ever named out loud the disappointments in your life? Jesus wants to fill those places with hope. He wants to make you whole because those are the places that the enemy loves to torment us. Let's just take that away from him. Tell Jesus the whole truth. Pour out everything that you see as ugly and unredeemable and experience the blessing of hearing him say in the deepest recesses of your heart, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed."

Think about Jesus. The beloved son of God speaking to you with a fiery love, "Daughter/son/loved one/adopted one/adored one, go in peace." It's a beautiful invitation. So what would hold you back? Are you stuck in the past viewing your life through the rearview mirror? Are you disappointed in yourself? In other people? Or even in God? What's keeping you from telling Christ the whole truth? Don't allow the disappointments of yesterday to rob you of a hope right now available today.

I know that we'll never understand this side of heaven the depth of the love of God. As his precious daughters, we have a glorious invitation to trade our disappointment for the sure and certain hope we have in Christ. For years, this woman had been defined by one thing and one thing alone, she was a woman with an issue of blood. Now she would be defined differently. She would no longer be defined by an issue but by her identity, as a daughter of God. When you're a child of God there is an identity that no one can touch. And for every "no" that you have received in your life, each one is outweighed by Christ's definitive "yes" on the cross.

As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "Outwardly, trust me, we're fading away. But inwardly, we're being renewed day after day after day." He goes on to say, "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison."

When Paul wrote to the church in Rome he put the disappointments of this life into perspective

as we look to our eternal home with Christ forever. He said this, "We can rejoice too when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment."

He was very definitive in how he wrote that last statement: "This hope will not lead to disappointment."

I love a theologian I read, his name is Miroslav Volf and he writes this: "Though our bodies and souls may become ravaged, yet we continue to be God's temple -- at times a temple in ruins but sacred space nonetheless."

So today, right where you are, in the midst of your disappointment, in the middle of your shattered places, would you let God redeem the ruins and renew your heart? You're a daughter of the king; beloved, no longer defined by your circumstances or labeled. Identified by one thing alone, a daughter/a son of the king.

One of the great joys I get to be part of here at *LIFE Today* and *LIFE Outreach International* is I get to travel and I get to see the impact that so many of you have enabled us to make in the lives of others because today there is some people who are in desperate need -- perhaps for years. Maybe some villages as long as 12 years, they've been longing for simply clean water. It is a day you and I, we get to be an answer to their prayers. 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

Sheila: I realize there was so much I didn't understand about so many of these villages, so many of these countries where they simply don't have access to clean water. I didn't realize how far these children have to walk every day. Some of them have to walk for miles. Some of these children never get to go to school because their job is to simply walk for miles to get water and to walk for miles and bring it back.

The other thing I didn't realize was how dangerous it is in some of these places. Some of these places where children have to go, it is very exposed and we've heard terrible stories of children who had been attacked and killed by wild animals.

If I think of how much you and I take for granted, every morning when I wake up, I just turn the faucet on to brush my teeth. I don't think about it. And yet I think of the number of moms who go to bed each night praying that someone will hear their heart cry and their prayer because what they want for their children is not the latest sneakers or the latest kind of iPhone, it is simply to be able to provide for their children clean water.

I've watched as some of those children in villages where we haven't been able to put a well yet, lift this water to their lips and everything within me wants to stop them but I realize they've got no choice. They drink nothing -- and there is no death more painful than dying of that terrible dehydration -- or they have to drink this dirty water knowing that there is a chance that they will contract some terrible disease and lose their life.

No mother should have to worry about things like that. We pray for our children. We pray that they will do well in school and do well in college and make good choices in their life. Those are normal prayers. Moms shouldn't have to go to bed at night, dads shouldn't have to go to bed at night, soaking what little pillow they have praying that someone will hear their cry and send clean water.

Well, we've heard the cry and not only that we've realized how doable it is. How easily we can

meet this need. For example, if you were able to give just \$48, do you know that that would provide clean water for ten people! If you were able to give a little bit more, say, \$144, that would provide clean water for 30 people!

And if you are one of the blessed people who are able to actually put a well in, \$4800, and you know that provides enough clean water for a 1,000 people? And it's literally Water for LIFE; not only does it give them life but it lasts for the life of the village. That well will last for like 70 years.

So please, will you join with us and give your best gift possible? Would you go to your phones? Would you dial that number on the screen or go online? But if each of us do something now then we're able to go back and bring you the stories of the changed lives because these children are able to grow up and be healthy and go to school. Who knows that God would raise up a leader among those children to change their nations for Christ? Would you call now?

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

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! I wanted to tell you too, if you're able to give an extra \$100 we have these amazing filter kits where we can take them to villages where we're not able to have access and they pour this water through this filter kit. They say it's almost like dialysis and then it comes out, it is so crystal clear and that would provide water for three families. So just for an extra \$100 that will make such a difference.

I just want to thank you so much for being with us and we'd love to send you *The Storm Inside* DVD. We have lots of lovely gifts that we would love to give you and I know you don't do it for that about it is just our way of saying thank you.

Remember, if you need us, we're here for you too. I'm Sheila Walsh saying thank you so much for being with us in *Wednesdays in the Word*. We'll see you next time!