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Week 35: WFL - Last Week
Wednesdays in the Word
Sheila Walsh
The Storm Inside: "Insecurity to confidence"

Sheila: Hi! I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *Wednesdays in the Word*.

I got a little note from someone the other day and they said, "One of the things I struggle with most in my life is insecurity." She said, "I'm a pastor's wife and I've been doing this for years. I sit and I listen as other women share their stories with me and I pray for them." She said, "I'm pretty sure that nobody in the church understands that I feel like I'm more insecure than any of them."

It's an interesting thing. I was with *Women of Faith* for 20 years and even though I walked up on that platform for 30 weekends a year, for all that time, I don't think there was one time that I walked up there where I didn't have to bring that insecurity to the Lord, that feeling of not being enough, of not having enough, of feeling as if God, are you still listening to me? Are you still with me? So that's really what I want us to look at today. How do we move from that place to a place of real solid, solid standing with Christ?

I think one of the biggest struggles for, it's not just me, it's not just women, it's men and women and that is insecurity. And probably, it will show up in different ways but the root is the same. With men, and I'm addressing this based on some things that I've observed in my own darling husband. When he feels a little insecure he goes into "fixer" mode -- I'll feel better if I can do something.

I think with us, with women, our insecurity can make us deflect any kind word sent our way. Have you ever tried to pay a friend a compliment recently? It is not as easy as it sounds. Like, "Oh I love your dress!"

"Oh this old thing? It was on sale."

"Did you color your hair? I love that shade!"

"You know, I just needed to cover up the gray."

We're a funny bunch. As women, we've taken deflecting compliments to an Olympic sport. What I find interesting though is it remains such a problem in the church. If you think about it, if you think who we are and what we believe it shouldn't be that way. Those of us who are in a relationship with Christ should be able to rest in the truth that we are loved right now just as we are every single day of our lives. We are the ones who have entered into a relationship that makes it clear the value that God has placed on our lives is the life of his own son Jesus.

Well, if you're like me, you can know that in your head but often we've not allowed that truth to sink into the darker, more broken parts of our lives.

A couple of years ago when Barry and I were selling our house, a realtor said something that's clearly true for the housing market but it was like a real aha moment for me. I think there is a huge message for us as God's sons and daughters. We were sitting around the table and looking at all paperwork and I asked her, "How do you decide on the asking price for a home?"

And she said, "A house basically sells for whatever someone is willing to pay for it."

Think about that for a moment. Take that thought and consider the cross of Christ. That's what God was willing to pay for you and for me. That's what he thinks we're worth. It's pretty amazing; huh? Well, you might be sitting there saying, "Amen!" But sometimes it is hard to live in that truth 24/7. When we see our reflection first thing in the morning or step on the bathroom scale it is easy to fall back on old thought patterns and old beliefs. It is the same insecurity that raises its head when we're given an opportunity to minister to each other.

For example, say you're asked to share your personal story with a group of women and at the end somebody says, "Thank you so much for sharing that. Your story really touched me."

Instead of being able to receive those words our first instinct is to say, "Oh, it wasn't me. It was the Lord."

Now I get that. We don't want to take credit for something that only the Holy Spirit can do. But the truth is, God chooses to use broken vessels like you and me to communicate his truth. I struggled with this for years. Part of my heart longed to hear that God had reached through me to touch another but the broken part found it really hard to accept. I think insecurity robs us of so much joy and confidence, not in ourselves but in who we are in Christ.

That wonderful old dictionary, Noah Webster's dictionary defines the word *insecure* this way: Not secure, not safe, not confident of security.

I find that definition really helpful. One of the harshest lessons that some of us learn as children

is that the world is not a safe place. Even in the body of Christ you know this, we're not protected from loss and broken relationships. Insecurity seems to be at epidemic levels. As in everything else that we struggle with, we have a rock solid source to turn to for help and that is the word of God.

So in this session we're going to look together at the lives of two women, Ruth and Naomi, who lost so much and yet came to understand how safe their lives had always been in the hands of our sovereign God.

I don't know how familiar you are with the book of Ruth. It's only four chapters long but we see how a sovereign God reached into their sorrow, very real, very profound sorrow and transformed everything. The story is not just about them, the circle widens to include you and me.

So as the book opens, we're introduced to a Jewish family who leave Bethlehem because of famine and they move to Moab, just southeast of the Dead Sea. This story takes place in the time of the judges in Israel, a time marked by moral decline.

We read this: In those days Israel had no king. Everyone did as they saw fit.

Sounds kind of familiar, doesn't it? I feel as if we're living in a day where everyone does whatever seems right to them. For Israel, though in our story it is not surprising then that there was a famine. This was often a sign of God's punishment when his people turned away from him. What is surprising though is that the family we meet here Elimelech, the dad, would take his family to Moab.

In biblical history, Moabite people were cursed by God of where they began as a nation. I don't know if you remember this or not but Moab, himself was Lot's son born from an incestuous relationship with his oldest daughter. So the Moabites were seen as a scandalous nation. But that's where this family went.

Now when you move your family, which includes two boys to a new country the inevitable is going to happen. They're going to meet girls, they're going to fall in love and get married. It must have seemed to Elimelech that he was moving further and further away from the promises given to Abraham. But God's love, God's reach is far greater than our insecurity and our poor decisions.

Let's look at Ruth, Chapter 1, verses 3-9: Then Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. About ten years later both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone without her two sons or her husband. Then Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had blessed his

people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland.

With her two daughters in law she set out for the place where she had been living and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah. But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters in law, "Go back to your mother's homes. And may the Lord reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me. May the Lord bless you with the security of another marriage."

Then she kissed them good-bye and they all broke down and wept.

Naomi was in a foreign land with no husband, and now the devastating loss of her two sons. So basically, she releases her two daughters-in-law to go back home where they will at least have a chance of marrying again. Girls don't want to leave me but all Naomi can see is a bleak future ahead.

This is what she says, "Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to another son who could grow up to be your husband? No, my daughters, return to your parents' homes for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible and I were to get married tonight and bear sons what then? Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? Of course not, my daughters, things are far more bitter for me than for you because the Lord himself has raised his fist against me."

Have you ever felt that way? You look at how your life's turned out and the only reasonable conclusion is that God is angry with you. God did this to me. God has abandoned me. Naomi goes so far as to change her name from Naomi, which means my joy or the pleasantness of Jehovah, to Mara, which means bitter. She's heartbroken and hopeless.

But God is not finished with her story. He is going to bring joy back into this bitter broken woman's life in ways she could never have imagined.

Ruth is a central character here. This Moabite woman from a cursed idol-worshipping nation will go on to become part of the lineage of Jesus Christ. She will become the great grandmother of King David. Isn't that just like God? To take someone with a questionable background and use them as part of history's greatest story.

Ruth's life will become a foreshadowing of God's plan of salvation unfolding through faith rather than by blood and birth. You might feel as if you were born on the wrong side of the tracks but I want you to remember this, Calvary destroyed the tracks and invited us all to come as we are.

Back to the story, Orpah returns home but Ruth refuses to leave her mother-in-law and even

more significantly, refuses to leave Naomi's God. You probably remember this beautiful passage: "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people. And your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us." Wow!

Some of God's greatest blessings come when we do the right thing having no idea what the outcome will be. When we choose God, when we choose his will and leave the outcome to him, that's often when we see miracles.

So Naomi and Ruth head to Bethlehem having no way of knowing all God has in store for them. So they settle in and Ruth wanted to provide for her mother-in-law asked Naomi if she can glean in the fields. Under the Law of Moses, it was customary for land owners to leave what the harvesters had missed for those that were poor, widowed, and fatherless.

We read this in Ruth Chapter 2, verse three. So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters and as it happened she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law Elimelech. That, to you and me, it might seem as if Ruth had been fortunate to encounter a kind man but it was so much more. God was at work. Ruth had encountered a redeemer.

Now the law only allowed the poor to gather in any field for one day. Then they had to move on to another field. But Boaz was about to intervene and change everything for Ruth. He saw her in the field and asked his men who she was. They told him, "She is the woman who returned to Bethlehem with Naomi."

And this is what Boaz said. Boaz went over and said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain. Don't go to any other fields; stay right behind the young woman working in my field. See which part of the field they're harvesting and follow them. I've warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you're thirsty, help yourself to the water they've drawn from the well."

Wow! What a miracle in the life of this young vulnerable widow. Instead of having to go from field to field and hope the men were kind, she was now in a place where she had a covering and protection. She began her relationship with Boaz as a servant but as you might remember, God had so much more in store for this faithful, godly, little girl. Ruth was to become Boaz's wife.

Now interestingly, Jewish law provided for those who had lost everything by designating the closest relative to be what was called a "kinsman redeemer." This person had the privilege, sometimes the responsibility to intervene and help. And when it was a young widow like Ruth,

the closest male relative was expected to marry her. Now Boaz was not the closest male relative. If he had been it would be tempting to think that he had just married Ruth out of obligation or under the law but that's not so. Boaz fought for her. He went to the other man and he said, "I want to marry Ruth."

This is what we read: So Boaz took Ruth into his home and she became his wife. When he slept with her the Lord enabled her to become pregnant and she gave birth to a son. Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the Lord who has now provided a redeemer for your family. May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons."

Naomi took that little baby boy and cuddled him to her breast and she cared for him as if he were her own. The neighbor women said, "Now at last Naomi has a son again."

And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of David.

What a gift to Naomi! God wasn't mad with her for speaking out the bitter truth in her life. God is not offended by our honesty. I honestly think he is offended when we pretend we're okay.

Now I don't know. I don't know what losses you've been through but I encourage you to pour out your pain to the Father who loves you. Boaz was a foreshadowing of Christ who is our kinsman redeemer. On the cross, he paid what he believes we are worth. He bought us back. He fought for us.

My bottom line on insecurity is summed up beautifully in a text from the book of Proverbs. I've loved this text since I was a child. And honestly, it is my daily prayer to live in these words. You probably remember it.

Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do and he will show you which path to take.

You're not alone. You're not abandoned. You're loved. And honestly, that is a message that here at *LIFE Today* and *LIFE Outreach International*, we want to take that message not just to our brothers and sisters in the states or in other parts of Australia and Europe, we want to take it to people who have maybe never heard that before. There are some people who are desperately in need right now for water. And this is our last week but we can make a huge difference and let somebody know you're not abandoned. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

James: I am by a water source that is so typical of water sources all over the world. We know for a fact in this area disease is killing entire families -- and many children. Why? From drinking contaminated water.

You know it is one thing to say "I'm sorry" and to weep over it but you know when we can be the answer to the need and the prayer, doesn't it seem sometimes just a little bit hypocritical if we could do something and we don't? Well, we can but we need your help.

Announcer: For near 20 years, the viewers of *LIFE Today* have partnered with missionaries all around the world to help save children's lives by providing clean drinking water. *Mission: Water for LIFE* has drilled over 5,000 clean water wells with an assortment of rigs in different shapes and sizes to meet the needs of a particular area. Each new water well is capped with a simple pump that even a child can use. And in areas where a drilling rig can't get into, the *LIFE* mission team is utilizing a new technology and providing thousands of water filter kits that families can use to decontaminate their water source.

With this attitude of doing whatever it takes to save lives, *LIFE Outreach* and its partners have already provided clean water for over five million people. But we still have a big job to do. Around the world, hundreds of millions of people still don't have access to safe drinking water and 800 children die every day from a preventable disease caused by contaminated water.

James: Jesus said, "Give a cup of water in my name, you won't lose your reward." I don't know what that reward will be for us, that's in God's hand but I know what reward is in it for the people we give water to. The reward is a chance, it's hope, it's a future -- the reward is life.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I love what James says there, doesn't it seem a little hypocritical to pray for something when we can be the answer to that prayer? Some of you are new to us. I know that because you've written to me or you've put things on my Facebook page and we just want to welcome you to the *LIFE Today* family and know that we're not just here to interview guests or just to share. We have this mission that we believe that one of the reasons we're on this planet at this time is to make a difference. We are not waiting for Jesus to come and get us out of here. We want to make a difference in his name and here's how we do it.

I cannot believe that so many children die every single day simply because they drink contaminated water. Now this is our last week. Our goal is to put 400 new water wells in this year. Every one of us can participate in that. Some of you can do the big thing. For \$4800 you

can actually put a water well in a village. I mean that's amazing. What a gift to give.

Maybe you're coming up on an anniversary. You think, what do we do for our silver anniversary? Wouldn't it be amazing to put a well in a village and know that children and moms are not going to have to walk miles for dirty water?

Some of you are thinking, there is no way I can do that. Can you do this? Do you know that for \$48 provides clean water for ten people? That's amazing! I've seen with my own eyes, I've had the privilege of walking with some of these moms and their children down to these filthy water holes and they have no choice, it's that or nothing. And almost every mother that I met when I was there has lost at least one child to something that was completely preventable.

Did you see when Ralph held up those two glasses? Wasn't that amazing? That system, some of you can give an additional \$100 and that will give three families a *LIFE Filter Kit*. The difference! Did you see the look on these women's faces when Ralph holds up one of the water that came straight out and then one once it's been through the filter system? I don't think you saw this time is Ralph stands there and he drinks it in front of them. He was saying trust me, this water is crystal clear and pure.

I know we hear about all sorts of trouble everywhere but for those of us who are in relationship with Christ who have been redeemed, one of the greatest privileges is to be able to reach out to other people. We call it Water for LIFE because it literally is that. When we put a well in a village it lasts for 70 years. That's the lifespan of a village, of somebody from birth to death.

But the other thing, the other meaning of Water for LIFE is that when people are desperate and we come in and we provide what they desperately need, somehow they're able to sit there and listen to somebody who says, "If you're thirsty, come unto me and I'll give you Water for LIFE." Would you do something? Would you do it 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.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

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

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

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

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! If the phones are busy -- and I hope they are -- then write the number down and keep trying. Don't give up! Don't allow yourself to get distracted because this is, as I said, this is our last week. We have made commitments to so many of these people we have met in villages that we will be back. We will put a well in their village.

One person can't do everything but we can all do something. And when we all gather together and do something, then it makes the most amazing difference. And as James said, that when we give a cup of water in Jesus' name then heaven alone knows what our reward is. That's not why we do it. We do it because have been redeemed, we have been set free, we've been given life.

So please, please call. When you do, we'll be happy to send you the DVD, *The Storm Inside* study that I did. And we have several other gifts for you. And I know that's not why you do it but thank you so much for spending this time with me. I really treasure that. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'll see you next time.