

11/6/17
Week 46: Fall Mission Feeding
Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh
Lisa Bevere

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh, along with Randy Robison and we're just so glad that you joined us. I have a woman who is one of my favorite people on the planet. I also love all the books she's written. But for the very first time she has written a children's book and it is darling. Would you please welcome my friend Lisa Bevere?

Lisa: Thank you. So good to be here.

Sheila: This is adorable.

Lisa: They did a great job illustrating it.

Sheila: *Lizzy the Lioness*.

Randy: Surprise! It is about lions.

Sheila: Well, I just wondered, at this stage what inspired you to write your very first children's book?

Lisa: So my third grandchild is my inspiration on this. So I watched her. I watched her around her older brother and her older sister. I saw how frustrated she was. She wanted to do everything that everybody else did. And I actually remembered when I was growing up, I was called Little Lisa and Big Lisa lived across the street. And Big Lisa could cross the street without holding her mother's hands. Big Lisa could go to anybody else's house. Little Lisa couldn't do anything. I was kind of like I remember that. So I thought, I wonder if I could put her in this story where she would feel empowered and she would understand that no matter how little she was she still had a voice. So yeah, it was kind of my inspiration.

I was actually at Christmas musical. She was crawling back and forth over us. We all have candles that are lit, so there was like danger factor involved and she's crawling and I was thinking, I'm going to need to write a story for this one.

Sheila: So Lizzy is the name of your granddaughter?

Lisa: Yes! Lizzy is my third granddaughter and she is three.

Sheila: Three! That's such a wonderful age.

Lisa: It is. It is so fun.

Randy: The thing I like about this book is you are writing to children in a children's context but you are teaching lessons that apply to all of us, male/female, young/old, all of us. Tell us some of the message behind the drawings.

Lisa: Absolutely. First and foremost, a lot of things I learned that have any value I learned as a child. I mean whether it was the C.S. Lewis books I read, or whatever it was, those principles are really important. I wanted every single mother to be kind of listening in while she was reading this story. So I thought, now, what can I do where the young daughters are going to feel empowered but the mothers will also feel empowered?

The whole theme of the book is that sometimes the most courageous thing any of us can ever do is ask for help. I think a lot of times we think asking for help is weakness, when really it is wisdom. So I wanted to weave a story where this little lioness sees a little girl in danger and she knows she cannot help her but she knows who can help her. So she goes back and she gets the parents and she gets help.

Actually, I fictionalized a true story. This is actually a story that I read years ago when I was writing *Lioness Arising* about this little Ethiopian girl who had been abducted. And her abductors took her out, they were beating her and a pride of lions comes out of the grass surrounds the little girl, chased off the abductors and just laid around this little girl until the villagers came out and rescued her. It's a true story. You can look it up online.

But yeah, this beautiful story and I've always been so intrigued because you're like why would these lions come out? And why wouldn't they have eaten the little girl? So I was like what if I made Lizzy the youngest, smallest member of the pride and that she would see this little girl at risk. And they were like we're not going to put in scary abductors; so they put in baboons. What can we do?

So again, we're living in day and age right now where parents have a lot of fear with raising their kids. I know even when my kids were little I was like I'm locking all of you in the backyard and I'm arranging your marriages. This is it. This is your life. It's you and me until I hand you off. But you can't do that with your kids. Fear is a horrible counselor. You do not want to lock away

your kids. And you, as a mother need to actually understand that you can equip them. You can't just hide them.

So I thought if I can write this book then I can create conversations. The conversations that were really important to me were as a grandmother, I get to have this wonderful opportunity for conversations with my grandkids all the time. So I had two of them with me not long ago in the car and I'm driving home from something. I'm driving and I kind of look in the rearview mirror and they're kind of sitting there and I was like, "Asher and Sophie, is anybody ever mean to you at school?"

And Sophie was like, "Nope! No one is ever mean to me."

I said, "That's great. Asher, what about you? Is anybody ever mean to you at school?"

He said, "Not at school."

I said, "Oh? Is somebody mean to you somewhere else?"

And then he began to talk to me about this little girl that had been bullying him and she's older, about three years older than him, hitting him in the face, bullying him, and excluding him and stuff. So I'm listening to this whole story and I know a little bit of the dynamics and I know that Sofia thinks this little girl is like amazing because she is like a big girl and Sophie wants to be a big girl.

So I said, "Sofia, what do you do when this is happening? Do you stand up for Asher or do you go along because you want to be a big girl?"

And Sofia throws her head back and just goes, "I go along because I want to be a big girl!" And she starts crying.

I was like, "Okay. Alright."

She's like, "Asher, from now on I'm going to stand up for you. I'm going to make her include you."

Sheila: I'll be your baboon.

Lisa: Exactly! I'll fight away the baboons! I was like oh my gosh. I'm just driving in the car and she is patting him and I was like, okay, this was a moment. Because I thought, these need to have intent wrapped around these kind of conversations.

But I remember my boys coming home from school. "Hey! How was your day?"

"Fine!"

"How was your day?"

"Fine!"

Like at the dinner table, "So did everybody have a good..."

"Everybody's fine, mom. We don't want to talk about it."

And then you put them to bed. And it's 10:00 at night or 10:30 or 11 and they want to have deep meaningful conversations. I'm like, "No, no. No, that was supposed to happen at four when I asked you what your day was like."

But a lot of times, children, they want to unburden their soul right when they are going to bed. That is really when the parents are like, "I don't want to have this unburdening soul conversation."

So I thought, if I can write questions in the back of this book where parents don't even have to think, they just can read the questions, is there anybody you're afraid of? Is there anybody you're seeing being mean to other people? Is there anybody telling you not to tell things? And letting them know that communicating things isn't always tattling. Just having that conversation and then they would know, okay, this is an opportunity. And maybe it is nothing but then they always know who they can come to. So this was just a really important tool.

And then if the mom's asking the kid that then she is going to have to model it as well. Because our children learn by what we model.

Sheila: One of the things that I think about children's books and I've written a couple, is that --

Lisa: My grandkids love your children's books. They say love your sweet dogs.

[Laughter]

Sheila: But when I finished reading the book, I thought this is a book that won't only touch the hearts of children but it really is, to me, you've given everyone, grandparents, mothers, fathers, children permission to raise questions.

I think we live in a culture where we're all on social media where we're Facebooking but sometimes feeling very alone and very isolated. That's when I finished reading the book, I put my hands down and I prayed for that; that God would use this to give children the permission to say, "You know what? I don't know if I can change the situation but perhaps I could get help." And to give parents an opportunity to begin because a story is one of those disarming things that God uses. That's why Jesus taught parables. It's like there's mysteries tucked into it.

Lisa: I feel like if you can be intentional with conversations, this is what I want grandmothers, mothers, fathers, whoever is reading the book to the kids, big sister, big brother, intentional conversations mean that we can locate the need and when you can locate the need then you can have a solution and you empower your kids.

So empowering them, right now we've got this whole culture, be brave! Be brave! But sometimes brave doesn't look like going and confronting it yourself. Sometimes being brave means you enlist help. And that again was a huge important thing for me.

I had an abusive encounter when I was a younger woman and first thing you do is you think, I shouldn't tell anybody. I was in the wrong place; this is possibly my fault. So I wanted to dismantle that so they wouldn't say this is my fault. I was seeing something I shouldn't have seen because I was in a place I shouldn't have been. Well, we just want to take away all of those things. Empower the moms, empower the kids to have these conversations. So yeah, I have thrilled.

And Lizzy, Lizzy is hilarious. When she reads it, she's like, "That's me! That's me! I say roar! I say roar!"

She has gotten so violent. I'm happy she is potty trained right now; she comes over to our house and starts stripping.

[Laughter]

She is like, "I'm a free child."

Sheila: She is going to watch this when she's 16 and just not be happy.

Lisa: I just hope she is still not doing the same things.

Randy: All right, moving along. There are a couple of things you mentioned that I want to go back to and I think you touched on it. You talk about unburdening your soul, the need to learn

how to do that. And you also talk about asking for help. Those are very adult issues. Are these things that you have had to learn as an adult maybe?

Lisa: Absolutely! Yes because as a young mother, I'm just going to say what I would do every single night. Every single night I went to bed with a list of everything I didn't do well enough. If I didn't clean enough. If I yelled at my kids or whatever it was I had this massive list, Randy every single night where I failed. My check, I wasn't able to check those things off. I felt so weighed down every single morning that every single morning I moved into my day burdened from the night before, burdened from the day before, I mean it went back perpetually. I thought, you know what? I can't live like this. I can't live like this.

So every day the mercy needs to be new every morning. The day has to have a fresh start. That day needs to be put to bed. Whatever was bad in that day needs to be addressed. Whatever was good needs to be celebrated. We need to move forward and instead of having this imaginary list that no one is really checking up on except for me. And so I would say, okay, the list needs to go away and I need to unburden my soul.

And then also asking for help. I don't think people understand we were made for each other. I have friends I need help from. Sometimes I just don't see things right. Or sometimes I just completely am feeling overwhelmed and I can call a friend. I know that Sheila has been that to me. We'll call each other...

Sheila: You've been that to me hugely. Let me just -- can I interrupt there a little bit just to say about one of the things that I love about the book is there's profound kingdom principles in this. The fact that the little lioness, Lizzy went back and said, "Listen, somebody needs help." There's strength in community.

We need a couple of safe people in our life and Lisa is one of those people that know that I live with depression. And if I am having a bad day, I text you and you're on your knees on my behalf. I think that what you're modeling in this is even the weakest or smallest person in the body of Christ can have a profound role when you say, "You know what? We need to get some help for some people here."

Lisa: And we need to give people permission. I love you and so I'm always going to be safe for you. But I hate that it even would ever seem like if you needed help that it was dangerous -- like it would be ever dangerous to ever ask somebody for help. I hate it that any of us would feel like if I ask you for help that that made me less than. I don't want people to feel that. I want that to be wisdom; in the multitude of counsel there is wisdom. I want my grandkids to see that. I think it kind of needs a lot of people's input and conversations and things grow in the dark. So I don't want that. I don't want that for my friends, I don't want that for my grandchildren, I don't want

that for myself. So absolutely. So unburdening my soul and what was the other thing you asked me?

Randy: Asking for help.

Lisa: I think I've gotten a lot better at that. I think as you get older you actually know what your strengths are and you let other people help you with your weaknesses. You don't want to have the blind sides.

Sheila: I think one of the things that is great is it took me a long time to realize it was okay to ask for help. But I think you're helping a young generation to grow up understanding that that's okay. I think the kind of culture we're living in and the times we're living in, there are so many issues where you think, well, I know she is struggling with that, he is struggling with that, and I honestly don't know what to do. But I bet I could find somebody who did.

So instead of people feeling paralyzed by other people's struggle or pain it actually gives an open door to think, where there is something I can do. I think that's really powerful, Lisa.

Lisa: Thank you. Well, I love what you're saying and I love that it is isn't just giving them permission but actually labeling it as courageous. I think that's the flip we need to make. I love what you've been doing with talking about mental health issues and bringing it out of the dark and bringing it into the light so that people don't feel isolated and don't feel alone, and don't feel ashamed to ask for help. Yeah. If we could start this earlier.

John and I when we were first married he would say, "It must be crazy to live in your brain." Like all sorts of things are going on in my head. I go, "And those are just the things I'm telling you. You have no idea what actually is going on in my brain." So I think that everybody needs to have those kind of people in their lives and if we dismantle things when they are small they don't get a chance to grow huge.

Randy: I think this is a good point to tell you who are watching that if you need to talk to somebody, if you need to unburden some things, if you need to ask for help, we have a prayer line available. We invite you to call. We want someone to pray with you and minister to you. So call that number right now if you want someone to just join with you and offer you the kind of support that these two lovely ladies have offered each other.

Sheila: I love that there's another part of the message in *Lizzy the Lioness* that it is never too late to step up and be courageous. I was talking to a woman last weekend at a conference I was at and she said, "For all my life I feel like I've been silent when I should have spoken up."

I said, "Okay. Check. Do you have a pulse? And if there is not a white chalk mark around your body, it is not too late."

I think that's the beautiful message of this book too that sometimes the bravest, most courageous thing is to say, "I can't do this but let's get you help."

Lisa: And everybody has a voice. Everybody has the right to use their voice; and nobody is too small to not have a voice. So we need to empower them to have those voices.

So it's been fun. You warned me that writing children's books are difficult. You would think it would be easier. It is hard. But I had a brilliant illustrator and the people at Thomas Nelson, as you know, are just awesome and they just kind of took me by the hand and Sheila gave me great advice on this. She knew the story line I wanted to write but she helped me understand there were things that would be illustrated that I wouldn't have to say.

Sheila: You would think that writing a children's book is easy. It's like only cover up so many pages. But every word has to count. You can't say something that kids are going to see in an illustration. So it is actually a lot more difficult which is why I think you did -- obviously, I'm your friend, I love you but this is a really good book. Otherwise I would just be saying, "Lisa has a book. Bless her heart!"

[Laughter]

No! This is fantastic!

Lisa: You would say, "Lisa, next time ask for help."

[Laughter]

Sheila: Be courageous, man!

[Laughter]

Randy: I want to ask you because there are some children right now who need some help and you have been there. You have been in the mission field with us where we're feeding over 400,000 kids a month? And what do you say to those that we're going to ask to help these children? So what do you say to someone who might join with us in helping them?

Lisa: The first time I ever went on anything with *LIFE Outreach*, I told my husband, I called him from the field, and I said, "I've always been afraid to ask for money." I said, "But I will

never ever again be afraid to ask for help for these kids."

When I saw the work that *LIFE Today* was doing -- and *LIFE Outreach* is changing cultures and saving and rescuing families, children from everything from clean water to food and starvation, it was it. John and I have just been honored to partner with *LIFE Outreach*. And I would just tell anybody they can trust you guys. When they feel the Holy Spirit tugging, they should go for it.

Randy: We appreciate that. We appreciate all the help that you and John have been to us. Now we want to ask you to watch something and see how you can be a big help. Watch this.

On the mission field

Cubal Malnutrition Clinic: Angola

Isak: Coming to malnutrition clinics like this is so devastating to see children because unfortunately, so many more children don't leave these clinics than what leave them.

But it's even more devastating to me today because this clinic is so full. You can see how they've actually put in extra beds down the aisle here. That's not normal because the conditions in this area have reached absolute desperation. As a result, the clinics are full -- full with children who are fighting for their lives, children who have literally reached that stage of being on death's door.

I've got to tell you that I'm tired of this situation. I'm tired of watching children die in clinics like this; child after child, mother after mother whose heart is broken... because of something so simple. The fact that children don't have enough food -- it's an injustice! Because if we remain silent to the silent killer, malnutrition will win the battle again and again and again.

Please we've got to do what we can do because we're able and together we need to act. But this is not where we solve it. Where we have the greatest chance is out there in their villages before children get into a severely malnourished state -- before they end up here. If we can just take Mission Feeding to those villages we can save those children's lives. We can save them from coming here. We can save them from death's door.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I'll never ever be able to erase the images of what I saw in the malnutrition clinic when we were in Africa. Little ones who could barely... who struggled just to take a breath. You probably saw that there in that video; who were crying but not the kind of cry of a healthy baby. It was a different cry. It was like a cry -- it was like a wail. It wasn't like a baby crying for his mom knowing that she is going to be there.

But to sit with the moms... to sit with these moms who just like you and me, they're no different. Okay, they were born there and I was born in Scotland but we are exactly the same. Every mother wants to be able to do things for your children; the very basic things, making sure they're warm, making sure they have food.

And the thing that I thought as I was watching that piece that Isak did is there are some situations you watch on the news and you think this is a disaster! This is terrible! And there's so little we can do. But the thing about this is we can do something. We can change this. I've seen the difference between holding a tiny little one in a malnutrition clinic who's -- the last time we were there we were told this little one is not going to make it. They had to wrap the child up in tin foil to try and keep the child warm.

Then two days later we went to one of the villages where we have our feeding program in place and there there was laughter and kids skipping. And the thing is that the food that we provide for children, it kind of looks like a bowl of oatmeal but it's actually not that. It's a soup and it's very nutritious. It is made specifically for those regions in the world and it is full of vitamins and minerals. Literally the first bowl begins to reverse the cycle from death to life.

Now that little lioness, Lizzy felt like she couldn't do much but she did what she could. The truth is every single one of us can do something. We can all do something.

Randy, what are we asking here today?

Randy: The breakdown is that \$30, \$50, \$100 will feed three, five or ten children for three months and that goes on and on so don't limit yourself if God is telling you to go big and help a lot of children. Please do.

There is one other thing I want to mention. We have built food factories in these areas to provide for the economy to provide jobs, to train them on how to feed themselves. We actually have an opportunity now beyond just the Mission Feeding to upgrade one of the food factories which will increase the production by 50% so it can do even more.

We need you to partner with us. You're seeing generations with me and my parents and Isak and

his parents in these desperate areas helping to save generations of children. We are committed because this is the expression of God to go in and give life to people, to express his love by being his hands.

Please go to the phone, go online, do what you can. Be courageous! No gift is too small, no gift is too large. We can have a huge impact in these children's lives. Do what you can today.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In impoverished and famine-stricken areas of Africa, children are suffering. The need is great. And without food, they face death by starvation. With your support, you will help feed and care for children in crisis areas of Sudan, Angola, and Mozambique.

With Africa facing ongoing food shortages and drought, we urgently need to replenish supplies and come to the aid of 400,000 children counting on us. Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for the next three months. Please also consider an additional gift to help provide critically needed upgrades to our food factory that will increase overall production by a staggering 50%. This is a \$216,000 challenge above our normal feeding budget that could help save even more lives.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you *In the Middle of the Mess*. In her new book, Sheila Walsh brings insight to knowing the peace and presence of Christ in the midst of life's inevitable messes.

With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed and care for ten children, we will send you Sheila's book, plus the "Arise" coffee mug. This heat-activated mug reveals Isaiah 61 each time you fill it with a warm beverage; a wonderful way to begin your day.

And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our "Determined Eagle" bronze sculpture. Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

James: No way for me to tell you how grateful I am to see these bags of food; I'm told over 70,000 meals on this one load. Betty and I started out really helping Peter feed 10,000 children. Now we're approaching nearly a half million.

I just say thank God because I've seen so many things happen. Children that were dying are now being fed and going to school.

It's all because of the food factory. It's all because of mission feeding and mission feeding is all because of you.

I'm saying to you right here from a miracle in Africa, you are the reason for the miracle. To God be the glory but it is God's love being expressed through you and you are glorifying God by your action and by your gifts. Thank you for helping. Let's keep doing it.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! If you go to the phones and they're busy, please write the number down. Call back. With any gift at all, we will send you *Lizzy the Lioness*. It's a fantastic book and I think it will be a great addition to your home.

Randy: There's another fantastic book that we're offering if you will ask for it and that is Miss Sheila Walsh's *In the Middle of the Mess* which will encourage you in prayer and meditation every day.

We have got wonderful gifts for you but really, the best gift you can give is to reach out, help us help those children. You can have a huge impact. Won't you do it today?

Lisa, thank you so much for being here. It's always a pleasure to have you.

Lisa: It's an honor. Thanks guys!

Randy: And you come back again every day for *LIFE Today* and join us online at our website at LifeToday.org.