

2/22/17
Week 9: WFL
Wednesdays in the Word
Sheila Walsh: "The Promises of God"

[In the Studio]

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

I got a book over Christmastime that I absolutely love. It is called *All the Promises of God* and it is by a guy called Dr. Herbert Lockyer. I think he was British. I think he lived in like the last century. But he lists over 8,000 promises in the word of God. It's not the kind of book you can just pick up and read through quickly. You have to kind of really sit down and study it. So I've made it kind of part of my daily routine this year. One of my commitments in 2017 has been to rediscover what's called the spiritual disciplines.

I was brought up in a small Baptist church in Scotland where all we were encouraged to do was to have our quiet time. And it was almost like if you love Jesus you brush your teeth and you have a quiet time. The thing I didn't like about that as I got older was I didn't like having my time with God put on my to-do list. I wanted it on my who-I-am list.

So I've been studying all the different ways that we're encouraged through scripture to really commune with God, whether it is through confession. In James it says: Confess your sins one to another and pray for each other that you may be healed. Whether it is in silence. You know there is such beauty in just being quiet. Remember: Be still and know that I am God. But also in meditation. Now I have to admit as a Scottish Baptist I thought meditation was a little dodgy because it sounded kind of weird, like a little bit eastern and little bit new agey until I began to really study the word of God. This has got to be the standard for everything, not anything we read on Facebook or anything we see anywhere else. The word of God is a plumb line for truth. I began to understand that some would say, like the Psalmist David, meditation was huge!

Here's the difference. If you're still a little confused, here's the difference between the more kind of eastern new age type. It encourages you to empty your mind. Christian meditation is about filling your mind with the word of God. There is something about -- David would say, "I lie on my bed at night and meditate on your word."

So that's become part of my routine in 2017; really spending time in prayer, fasting, confession,

community, silence, gratitude. But the more I begin to study the promises of God, something became so clear to me. If we actually believe them, don't you think we would live differently? If you absolutely believe every promise of God, it would shift how we live.

But the problem is that we live in a world that makes a lot of promises and then doesn't deliver. Like the diet where you lose ten pounds by Tuesday. Tried it -- didn't work! I gained half a pound.

I remember when Christian was little, when my son was just a little boy, he was watching something on TV just before Christmas, and you know how it's toy commercial after toy commercial. And he said to me, "Mom, look at this! Can we get this fishing pole?"

I said, "Well, sure. If you want to learn to fish, babe, that's great. I grew up fishing."

He said, "No. But this is a special one, Mom. It guarantees you'll catch a fish in ten minutes."

I'm like, "Christian, they can't guarantee you'll catch a fish. That's an art."

He looked at me with these big innocent brown eyes and he said, "Mom, they couldn't say it on television if it's not true."

Ughhh!

See the problem is maybe somebody has made promises to you and then they reneged on them. Someone has told you, "I will always love you." Even something simple, "I'll meet you for dinner next Tuesday" and they don't show up. We get a little jaded, we get a little suspicious as to whether people will fulfill their promises.

And sometimes I even wonder, as believers, do we think that God's promises are based on our behavior? So if we don't always line up, does that negate the promises of God?

I saw a kind of interesting example of that. After my mother-in-law, Eleanor died my father-in-law, William, we invited him to come live with us. He was 79 and he lived with us for three years -- three of the best, most fun years of our life. He was such a character. But I realized he had grown up with this very strict ethic of love was based on behavior.

One night at dinner we were sitting around talking and I knew that William's knees had been bothering him a little bit. He said something to me that was really uncharacteristic. It was really sharp and really unkind and not like him at all. He immediately excused himself from the table and disappeared up to his room. I thought, well, I'll give him a little while.

After a little while I thought, I want to check on him. So I went upstairs and I knocked on his bedroom door and he invited me to come in. He was sitting on the end of the bed with his little suitcase packed. I said, "Pop, what are you doing?"

He said, "Well, do I leave now?"

I said, "What do you mean do you leave now?"

He said, "Well, I broke the rules."

I said, "Pop, we used to be a family of three, now we're a family of four. You know what? You get to break the rules."

Rules are good to give some kind of order but grace and love are what we need to live. But I think sometimes we think with God, I didn't behave well so I'm not so sure about the promises of God.

I want to read you a Psalm that I have loved for a long, long time. I'm going to tell you how this Psalm came to life at the top of a mountain in the north of Scotland.

Psalm 121, and I'm reading from the New Living Translation. Here's what it says:

I look up to the mountains. Does my help come there? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. He will not let you stumble. The one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers, never sleeps. The Lord himself watches over you. The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade. The sun will not harm you by day nor the moon at night. The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

When life gets a little stormy, it can be something that's happening in your family or it can be something in your own life and you feel like I'm not sure if God is still with me.

I've discovered a profound lesson. If you are a student growing up in Scotland, England, Ireland or Wales, they have a thing called the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It's something that the queen's husband, Prince Phillip gives out to high school students. It takes you five years to earn this. The very first year, if you do it, you have to do all sorts of projects. You have to go camping. You have to volunteer. You have to... all sorts of things. If you get through the first year then you get this bronze award sent to you in the mail. Two more years of community service and all sorts of different things, if you manage to do that, then you get the silver award.

But if you manage to go the whole five years and complete some pretty tough assignments then you're invited to go to Buckingham Palace and you're presented with the gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Well, I was able to do that. I was able to do the whole five years and then go to the palace and receive that award. It was kind of an amazing day. But the last thing that I had to do, I almost didn't make it. It was quite a challenge. What I had to do was to go to a range of mountains called the Cairngorms way up in the north of Scotland. And you had to survive for four days and three nights in a single tent no matter what the conditions were. You had to find ways of starting a fire naturally; and at the end of the time, if that was your last thing and you completed it then there was a place you could go to in a little town called Abby Moore and they would stamp to say you'd completed it.

So three of us did it that time: my friend Moira, my friend Linda and I. We took the train way up into the north of Scotland, which is so beautiful. The first day we managed to walk about 12 miles and we found a place where we could camp. We set up our tents and made some tea. We managed to get a fire going. No Scottish person can survive without a cup of tea before bedtime.

But the second day was so much more difficult. A storm had blown in and there was snow and icy winds in our face. And we only managed to go for about five miles. We tried to find a place where we could pitch our tents and it was so difficult. We tried to make a fire and that night we were not able to. But eventually, around the side of the mountain there was a little shade and we finally managed to get our three tents up for the night. We decided we just wouldn't be able to make any food but we would hope that the storm had passed by morning.

So I crawled into my little tent, into my sleeping bag, and fell fast asleep. The last thing I read was Psalm 121: The Lord watches over you. He is a shield over you. Well, I woke up at about 2:00 in the morning and someone was outside my tent and I could tell by the shape that it wasn't Moira and it wasn't Linda and they were pressing right against the side of my tent. I was petrified. I didn't know what to do. I tried to quietly call my friends but they were fast asleep, plus the wind was howling outside.

So I thought, okay the only things I have, I've got my Bible and I've got my flashlight. So I'm going to crawl out there and with the Lord's help I'll hit them with one or the other: The word of God or my flashlight. So I managed to ease out of my tent and I came face to face with a huge Scottish highland sheep who had kind of fallen against my tent. And it was yes! You know the commercial, I've fallen and I can't get up! So I tried to move this great big beast but it wouldn't move. So I thought what do I do?

I'd remembered that earlier on when we were trying to find a place to pitch our tents there was like a tiny little cleft in the side of the mountain just like a little cave. So I thought, I need to try and find that. So I pulled my sleeping bag out from underneath big Bertha the sheep, and I used my flashlight and I looked to see that I was alone in the little cleft of the rock; I didn't want to be joining in other critters and it was fine so I put my sleeping bag up, I crawled in and mercifully, I fell asleep.

When I woke up in the morning and I looked out, it was spectacular. The storm had passed, the sun was shining on the snow on the mountains. It was one of the most glorious views I've ever seen in my life. I looked out. I could see for miles. And my Psalm came back to me: He will not let you stumble. The one who watches over you will not slumber.

What I realized that night was there are some nights when we find it hard to sleep. There are some nights we've got so much on our minds we don't know what to do. Maybe you face that in your life. Maybe you're struggling at the moment with something that you're so concerned about. Do you know that you can go to sleep and that God watches over you? Do you know he never takes a nap? There is never a moment when he is not watching over you.

As I lay at the edge of that cave that morning and looked out as the sun was shining on the brilliant new snow, I felt the Lord saying, "Sheila, I was there in the storm as much as I'm there on this glorious morning."

I want you to know that too. I want you to know God's promises are true. I want to just remind you of just a couple. Second Corinthians 1:20, 22 says this:

For no matter how many promises God has made they are all yes in Christ.

Isn't that amazing? Because sometimes we think, well, some of these promises might have been made for the children of Israel, some of these might have been specific but Jesus Christ is the yes to every promise of God. It goes on. It gets even better!

So through him the amen is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Now listen to this.

Now it's God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us.

Do you know that? Do you know that God has set his seal of ownership? He looks out at you and says, "That's my girl! That's my boy!"

It was funny when I used to travel with *Women of Faith* and my son Christian would come with me and one day at the arena, we had big arena events and there was security back stage. We all had back stage all-access passes but the day that Christian came over with a young girl who was helping me on the road, they had forgotten their all-access passes and left them back at the hotel. I happened just to be coming back stage as I saw Barry and my son Christian come in and the security guard wouldn't let them through. Christian caught sight of me and he yelled, "I'm with her!" And I could go and claim my son.

But do you know that's how God feels about you? That's how God feels about you. If you find yourself in a tough spot, if you think, Lord, I don't even know how to pray. I don't even know where you are right now. Do you know you can certainly say hey, I'm with him. I'm with Jesus. He has set his seal of ownership on you and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.

Sometimes if you're like me you might get frustrated in your life. You think some days, Lord, I feel like I'm going two steps forward and three steps back. But you know it is not about you and I getting it right. Do you know that Christ himself has committed himself to completing the work he began in you and me?

Let me remind you of a couple more of these incredible promises because the thing is, people change their minds all the time. So you might have been promised something and then somebody changes their mind.

We had our house on the market and a couple came to see it and they said, "Oh, absolutely! We're all in. Do you mind just repainting this room and if you could fix that?" And at the very last minute, as often happens, you know what? They pulled out. That's life.

God will never ever back out on you. God will never fail you. You can count on every promise. Here's just two or three of them to show you how trustworthy he is.

This is Numbers 23:19:

God is not a man so he does not lie. He is not human so he doesn't change his mind. Has ever spoken and failed to act? No. Has he ever promised and not carried it through?

Here's another wonderful promise from Hebrews 10:23:

Let us (you and me,) let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope that we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

Final one: Maybe this hits where you live today: Matthew 11:28:

Jesus says, "Come to me. Come to me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens,

and I will give you rest."

He doesn't say I might give you rest. He doesn't say if you've behaved this week I'll give you rest. He says, "Come on. Come to me. I promise I'll give you rest."

There are so many promises in the word of God and the moment that Christ came on this earth as a tiny baby every promise became yes in him. So if you've been lied to in your life, I understand how hard that is. But I want you to know if you've never really studied the word of God, I encourage you to do so. If we can help you, call us. We are here for you.

But just as we're here for you, you're helping us do something that's literally changing the world. Christ says whoever drinks of me will never thirst again. Well, we've put that into a very practical application in providing clean water before we introduce people to the water of life. Watch this.

[On the Mission Field]

Open captions:

Solange: I remember when I would come home from school, my two little sisters would come running, saying, "Look, it's Solange!"

Announcer: 15-year old Solange loves her family and works hard collecting water for them. However, drinking the water in her village comes with great risk.

Open Captions: When my little sister got diarrhea, we took her to the hospital. But she did not survive. One week later, my other sister became sick with diarrhea. She died shortly after.

Announcer: Due to the scarcity of water, Solange can spend up to eight hours a day collecting the water her family needs. You and I spend eight hours a day on something we value: A paycheck, time with family or friends. Solange spends eight hours a day on this.

Open Captions: I feel so sad because I know this water took my sisters. They loved me so much. Before they died, they asked for me so they could say good-bye.

Announcer: Parasites in the water are causing fatal cases of diarrhea every day in Solange's village and in numerous villages throughout Africa. The number one victim: Children under the age of five.

Open Captions: So many people here are dying from this dirty water. Not two weeks go by

without someone dying. I am surprised no one has died today. I'm afraid my other siblings might die also because we must draw from that same water. If you could bring clean water, we would no longer die from drinking this muddy water. If we had clean water, we could live full lives.

[In the studio]

Sheila: It's just so wrong. It's so fixable. That's the thing that blows me away. I don't know if you ever kind of tune out when you see things like that because you think, well, that's just the other side of the world and those people are used to that. No, they're not! I've sat with these people. They're just like you and me. So many of them are women of faith, so many of them love Jesus but they have no choice. What do they do? If they don't give their children something to drink the children will die of thirst which is one of the most agonizingly painful deaths. So they have to give them the only water they have.

But you and I can change this. That's the amazing thing. I have sat with these women. I've seen with my own eyes the difference it makes. They're not asking for a lot. They're not asking for a new Lexus. They just want clean water. And you and I, who have been given a lot have the opportunity -- it's not like we've been pressured or you have to do it to be a good Christian. This is a joy! We get to do this. We get to be the answer to somebody else's prayer.

So we have a goal. What we want to do is put 188 wells in 188 villages. You and I, we can do this. I promise you, we can do this.

I don't know how much you would be able to give. Perhaps you could give \$48 and that will help ten people; \$144 will help 30 people. Some of you might actually be able to build a well, to put a well in -- that's within some of your grasp, \$4800.

But here's the deal. We can all do something. My son, he started just collecting all the coins and when he would have enough coins he would take it and get it transferred into notes and then send it off. Because we're able, some of these villages, we can't get a well in so we come up with this fantastic new filter system and for \$100 you can provide clean water for three whole families.

No big sister -- no big sister should be called into a hospital room to say good-bye twice to her little sisters simply because they don't have clean water. Would you help us? It's just the most amazing privilege because I get to sit here and talk to you about it and I get to watch these pieces but then I get to go -- I'm going to Burundi and I'll be able to see -- I want to see fresh wells put in there.

If you could see the look on these people's faces; you think Christmas is amazing when your kids open a present and they get what they're looking for? It is nothing compared to the look on the faces of these women who have to -- can you imagine, eight hours a day having to just go and get water that you know is not even good for you? We can change that.

If we put a well in 188 villages we have changed their lives forever. And honestly, I believe then we have the privilege to tell them about Jesus who is the water of life. So please, would you go to your phones? Would you go online? Would you do something now?

[Begin video clip]

Announcer: Every day children living in extreme poverty are forced to make a dreadful choice, drink dirty polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from 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. You can help end the suffering because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today, you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in over 15 nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people, a gift of \$48 will help provide for ten, \$72 will provide for 15 people and \$144 will help provide fresh, life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift we'll send you *The Riches of Christ*, what true prosperity looks like filled with wisdom, prayers and scripture. James Robison adds insight from what God has shown him about finding contentment in the Father's provision for your life.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the *Children of the World Storybook Bible*. This easy to read Bible features colorful art by children from nearly 50 countries around the world.

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 the "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

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.

[End of clip]

[In the studio]

Sheila: Thank you so much! I can't wait to show you the pictures. When I get back from Burundi I can tell you, I can show you a village that had no water and now they have water. This is doable. We are God's people. We're on this planet at this time to make a difference and once you've seen something, you can't unsee it. We're accountable. But to me, it is not a must do, it is we get to do it in Jesus' name.

For any gift at all we'll send you my book *5 Minutes with Jesus: A Fresh Infusion of Joy*. But if you want to do the \$100 to provide that filtration kit for three families, we'll send you this beautiful canvas that says, "No Greater Name than the Name of Jesus."

Let's do something. Let's make a mark in this world for Jesus. So thanks so much for being with me on *Wednesdays in the Word*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'll see you next time!