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Week 27: WFL
Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh
Eric Morgan

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy Robison. We're so glad that you took time to stop by and be with us. I really believe that this show is going to have an impact on your life.

Maybe you've been a believer for a long, long time and you wonder why you're just struggling. You're trying to get it right and you feel like you're a disappointment or a failure. I believe our guest -- that God is really using his life. He's already spoken to me through him just meeting him. So I'm excited for you to hear from him. So please welcome our guest, Eric Morgan.

[Cheers & Applause]

You have friends in the house.

[Laughter]

I love that!

Randy: Good to have you. Just for a little background, I want people to know just a little bit about who you are and what you do because most people won't recognize you because you're in business.

Eric: That's right. I'm Eric Morgan. I am in business. I have a commercial real estate brokerage company. So we mainly, primarily work with businesses that are looking to buy, lease, or sell property.

Randy: This is what I love about this show because a lot of you are going to find out, you're going to go, okay, he is not on TV, he doesn't have his own ministry, and he hasn't written these books that have sold a bunch of books. He's just a regular guy. He is kind of like me." Right? You're going to find out what God wants to do in everyone's life. You don't have to be a spiritual super star in ministry full time. This is what God wants to do through everyone.

So with that set up, why do you think we asked you to be here? I know you know. Tell the

audience what got us excited to hear what's going on in your life.

Eric: Well, the testimony of Jesus. Right? The redemptive power of the gospel, I believe, is why I'm here. I'm looking forward to sharing my story with you guys. I love what David says in the scriptures. He said, "All who fear God, gather around and let me declare to you what the Lord has done for me."

Sheila: Even though I've said Eric, that just even having a chance to have dinner with you and your darling wife, and hearing a little bit about your life and the rich understanding you have of what it means to be in Christ, I think what makes it even more powerful is that that was not always your story. Could you give us a little back story of -- I know you prayed with your grandmother when you were just a little boy but things took a different turn. Talk to us a little bit about your life.

Eric: They did. So I grew up in Anchorage, Alaska. I was born and raised up there. I had one of those grandmothers, you didn't go in the house without hearing about Jesus. If you came in, you were praying before you left, more than likely. Bless her! Memaw, she was special. I remember praying with her when I was four to receive Christ. And to give you a little back drop, I remember having a burden for other kids in my neighborhood at a young age wondering will they go to heaven, will they go to hell, and do they know Jesus? As a young kid, I remember having those burdens.

I also remember as a young kid experiencing fear at a young age. Fear that my parents would drop me off and never come back to get me. You realize fear is more than an emotion, it is actually a spirit. We know that God doesn't give us a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind.

So I think what happened, Sheila to answer that question, I was by the time that I got into high school, I had an older brother who was a senior, I was a freshman so I kind of walked right into knowing everybody, being popular in school. We grew up in Alaska so it was very frequent that we would skip school and go skiing during the day.

[Laughter]

It was a lot of fun at the time. Not the best thing we should have been doing. So it really introduced me to really the partying scene then. Skipping school, beginning to walk in small steps of deception, drinking alcohol and things like that.

My identity began to shift from who I was in Christ to what others thought of me; to the approval and opinion of my peers. I was a pretty good athlete so I began to put more value and stock in

my performance. That really created the shift that was going to bring about the collapse that ultimately happened.

So I found out when I was 15, it would have been the end of my freshman year going into my sophomore year, my parents announced, "We're going to move to Texas." I remember going, wow, that doesn't sound like a good time to me. Yeah, come to Texas everybody has a lot of state pride. So I tell them, "You cut Alaska in half, you're the third largest state." That didn't go really well.

Randy: But you get a little of our sun, we'll melt you right down to Delaware. Right?

Eric: That's right! In truthfulness, I thought everybody in Texas wore Wranglers and rode horses to school. Then when I got here the joke was on me because I got here and they all thought I was an Eskimo.

[Laughter]

I was like y'all clearly don't know what an Eskimo is. So it was a traumatic experience. But really, it was a tough experience.

We moved to Plano. When we moved here, I experienced a lot of rejection. All that identity that was built on false foundations collapsed. So I remember for the first time feeling real lonely, I felt very insignificant. I felt like everything I began to do was in a search to be significant, and so that led to alcohol, that led to the wrong group of friends, that led to the party scene that eventually led to alcohol and drugs and then gangs and then people involved in crime and violence that really was the wrong place to be.

The word says -- you can summarize it this way: Show me your friends and I'll show you who you are or who you're about to become. The word says, "Be with evil and become evil. Be with righteous and become righteous. Curses chase sinners while blessings chase the righteous." So I came to experience the curses of those decisions.

Randy: Did you ever get in any kind of serious trouble?

Eric: I did. I did. 1999, I remember very clearly because I really in my heart realized my life was heading down a destructive path. I had friends that went to jail. I had some that passed away along the way and remember thinking I'm going to end up dead or in jail if I keep this up. I remember I called my parents and said, "Man, I really want to start going back to church with you." I had a desire but I felt powerless to change. I just felt like I did not have the power to change.

It's kind of like the scripture that says, "When a demon is cast out of a man it goes into the dry places and it finds seven more powerful. They come back and find the house empty but clean and the end of the man is worse than he was to begin with."

So in 1999, I almost lost my life three times. The first time I was in a bad car accident. I was out celebrating something and drinking and driving and I wrecked the car that I was in; smashed it into a cement median under one of the highways. And I had a girl that I was dating at the time who was hurt pretty seriously; she broke both of her legs, sister in the back broke her hip and there was a child in the car at that time. Thankfully, I hit the windshield and the child hit my back or I may not have been here to do this interview with you.

So the insanity of sin. The slavery that it keeps you in and the foolish decisions you make.

Another time I had an altercation in a night club and I remember there was a guy that I was trying to fight. I remember I had popped my trunk and all I could find in there was a screwdriver. He kept pulling up in the street and I finally just threw it and it busted out his back window. But I chased him so far up the road that by the time he turned around and came back I started to run and I realized, I either have got to go under the tires or over the hood. And so I remember getting hit by the car and blacking out for a moment. I remember when he came back around he was coming around to finish me off. I was able to get up and get away and he ended up hitting a guard rail and something else from what I can remember.

The problem was I would drink so much, I'd drink until I blacked out often. So I'd wake up the next day and go, "Oh, my gosh! What happened?"

Sheila: I want to get to what God did in your life.

Randy: It's coming soon -- real soon right?

Sheila: I just want to know, do you remember a moment when the presence of Christ arrested you?

Eric: Sheila, I do. So I had been arrested in 2000 for a D.W.I. And unlawful carrying of a firearm. I was out on bond. I was at a friend's house and the craziness of this, I would go and drink with them and hang out before they would go out to the clubs and then I'd go home. It wasn't a good setting. There was alcohol, drugs present and we were all sitting out on this porch and it was one of the worst thunder and lightning storms I remember in Texas.

As we were sitting there, the Holy Spirit came on me so strong. It felt like somebody had a gun

drawn on me and it was the most powerful prayer I've ever prayed in my life. And I heard the Lord say, "Eric, you're going to live for me and you're going to tell others what I've done for you."

I remember saying, "Yes, Lord!"

Man, when the spirit of the Lord came, where the spirit of the Lord there is freedom. I just wept for probably 10-15 minutes. These guys are thinking what in the world is wrong with you? Because I dealt with a lot of fear, the alcohol was liquid courage. So they were used to me being the macho guy, the tough guy and I just wept and wept and they couldn't believe it. The first thing I wanted to do was call my dad.

I said, "Dad, you're not going to believe this." If I was drinking, that was the last person I'd call because my mom's dad was an alcoholic and my dad's dad was an alcoholic so they never had alcohol in the home. I was raised in a Christian home and just made a lot of bad choices because I was deceived and did. But I remember calling him and I said, "Dad, you're not going to believe this but I'm going to live for the Lord and I'm going to tell others what he's done for me."

He said, "Son, how much have you had to drink tonight?"

[Laughter]

Randy: Which was a fair question.

Eric: It was a fair question. I'd violated their trust so much. But the lie that I had believed all that time I thought I'm not a Satan worshipper, I'm just doing my thing. I'm going to come back to the Lord in my time. What I realized after that was there is no neutral ground. You're either serving God or you're serving the enemy. I remember thinking, man, I cannot believe that! I want to live so loud for the Lord the dead can hear me and come to life. Like if I live -- [Emotional] -- if I live radical for the enemy, how much more for the Lord? That moment, I relive it when you ask about it.

Randy: What happened -- what happened from then on?

Eric: Well, everything changed. Everything changed. I love to tell people the gospel changes everything. It really does. As a matter of fact, if you broke down the New Testament words for gospel, evangel, kerygma, the words -- in layman's terms it would sound something like this: The gospel is an announcement of such utter and paramount significance that upon hearing it nothing again will ever be the same.

Sheila: Wow! Would you just say that one more time? Because that is stunning!

Eric: So the gospel, the announcement of the gospel is an announcement of such utter and paramount significance that upon hearing it nothing again will ever be the same.

[Cheers & Applause]

And we read in scriptures where it says clearly the angels long to look into this salvation that we inherited. So when you're not hearing that you realize, man, an angel wouldn't even turn his head at that. Like we've got to get to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Sheila: What is it you think a lot of us have missed? Because I know that I spent the first 30 years of my life, I gave my life to Christ when I was 11 so however many years that was, trying to be good enough for God, trying to never let God down, trying to never fail. It wasn't until my life crashed and I ended up in a psych hospital that I discovered that it was never about me getting it right. It was about Christ who makes us right. I was seeing myself in the mud I was sitting in but when God looked at me he saw the righteousness of Christ. How did you get to that place of grasping hope of that?

Eric: I want to make it really clear after sharing my story that my story is not about how bad I was, it is about how good God is. See, God doesn't love us because we're good, he loves us because he's good. And see we've made a major mistake in the church, I think, in this belief -- and the enemy twists what we hear. But we've made it many times about being good.

And the central issue of the gospel isn't about being good, it is about being loved. It's learning to live as a people that is radically loved by God. I think what has happened with the gospel is -- there is two ancient lies that I love to talk about and many out here, we've talked about it a lot. You can trace it all the way back to the garden and you can bring it all the way to modern day religion and even in the church in America, it's crept in. One is: Do to be. If you do this, you'll be like God. So Adam and Eve bought the lie, they reached for something higher than humanity and they fell to something less than human.

The second is: Do to get. If you do this, God will do this. Well, see the problem with that is that puts God in the position where he is in debt to us and he responds to us. So you've got to understand in the new covenant who is responding to who. See God always initiates, man always responds. If you ever think that God responds to man you'll make Jesus into a button you can push or a lever you can pull. You may use him as a means to an end rather than celebrating him as the beginning and the end.

Sheila: That's one of the greatest lessons I learned when I was flat on the floor. I felt as is the

Lord said Sheila... for me the realization was I'm not the good news, Jesus is. What a relief! I mean what a relief! You spend your whole life thinking I've got to get this right.

But I'm thinking of our viewers thinking, I recognize the truth of this. Something is stirring in me. How do I begin to shift my understanding?

Eric: That's a great question because I really believe inside of every believer there is an eternal tuning fork built within. You say, "I don't know that guy but I know what he said is true because when you hear the gospel it's like somebody hits that tuning fork and you've got to move to that sound. We move to that sound. The way the Lord showed me and the way he spoke to me, I remember ever since I was young I had this sense of greatness about my life. We talked about this earlier and in the flesh I thought it meant well, I'm going to be famous, and everybody is going to know me. It was all about me. What I didn't know, the Lord began to show me, he said, "Eric, you know that sense of greatness you had since you were young," he said, "it is not about something great you're going to do for me. It is about the one in the family to which you belong."

When you're in Christ it is about your identity, it's not who you are, it is whose you are. And because of whose you are then it becomes about being a son and a daughter and we can actually live. He said, "Eric, what I want you to do, I want you to stop living for the riches of Christ and I want you to begin to live from the riches of Christ."

Sheila: That's huge! Just write that there, it's huge!

Randy: There's all these sermons you've just thrown in here.

Sheila: Can you come back for the next 12 weeks?

Randy: It's that kind of thing. Literally, you go to LifeToday.org and rewatch this show and hear this again.

But I have one question for you because obviously, this didn't just come out of nowhere. You didn't go from drunk at a party to all this understanding and this really kind of a paradigm shift from a lot of today's churches unfortunately. What was it that started you to change how you saw God and how you saw yourself that started you down this path?

Eric: Well, thank God I had a family who loved me. I had family that was praying for me. I always say when you've got family members praying for you and you're not living right, you're in a dangerous place. [Laughing] Oh man! I'm telling you. So thank God for that.

Sheila: That's right great! I think that gives a lot of hope to parents out there who watch and

are thinking, my son is not living for the Lord -- my daughter is not living for the Lord, you keep praying and he is going to show up.

Eric: Pray for these prodigals. Pray for them because things will be different than they would have been because you prayed. We can come boldly to the throne of grace where there is well time help in our time of need. I think of James when he said, "The prayer of the righteous man makes much power available, dynamic in its working."

So yes, those prayers drew me in. Others took time to love me and care about me and tell me the good news. But the thing that really changed me, Randy was when I set my eyes upon Jesus. The Word says, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith; who for the joy set before him endured the cross."

I think as Christians we usually go, I get it. He's the author of my salvation but I'm the finisher. No! He's the author and the finisher. The Word says in Corinthians, it says to this day when the law is read there is a veil over the eyes of men. But for one who will look to Christ a veil is removed. And when we see Christ we are changed from glory to glory. It is not by what we do that changes us, it is by seeing him. And when we see him and we receive this love it radically changes our life. Literally, the Word says, "In Christ you're a new creation. The old has passed and the new has come."

When y'all asked me to be on the show I remember thinking, I haven't even talked about that old dead guy in a long time. I'm going to have to dig him up. I mean dig him out of the grave, he stinks but thank God in him I'm a new creation. And that we are found in Christ.

Over 163 times in the scripture Paul implores us with, "in Christ," or "in him." So that is really our glory is that we no longer live for his love, we actually get to live from his love. I like to tell people, I used to say, "Brother, you need to receive Jesus into your life." But what I now tell them is you need to receive his life as your life. Because the gospel isn't just that you receive Jesus into your life, it's that he receives us into his life. Like that's awesome! That is an awesome reality.

Sheila: Yep! That would qualify as awesome!

[Applause]

Eric: If you think about it, I'm trying to think of how to say all this in one sentence, and here's a great way to say it. Jesus -- it is tough! Jesus didn't just die for your sins and rise from the dead to give you a relationship with the Father. He came and he died to give you his relationship to the Father. So if you're in Christ you're as close to the Father as he is today. If you're in Christ, his

perfection is now your perfection. If you're in Christ his righteousness is now your righteousness.

But see in the human race -- we don't talk about this often but in the human race there is really only two races of people. There are those who are in Adam, dead in their sin and those who are in Christ. We don't recognize how bad our condition is. I think today we think, I'm sick trying to get well or I'm bad trying to get good. But my God, he doesn't do that. He doesn't make bad people good, he makes dead people alive. And the Word says that those who sat in darkness have seen a great light and those who are in the valley of the shadow of death light has dawned.

That's us! That's not just the people in Nazareth. That's not just the people in the Bible, that's us today. If you have not repented of your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ, you're separated, alienated and dead. If you're in Adam, you're as alienated as he is. You're as dead as he is, you're as condemned as he is, and you're as judged as he is. But if you're in Christ, you're as loved as he is, you're as forgiven as he is, and you're as holy as he is.

Randy: Is that not a wonderful word?

[Applause]

The joy of the gospel right there. We have a chance to share the joy, the life that Christ has put in us with other people. We have a wonderful opportunity to let that river flow and see dead come to life, sometimes literally. I want to show you a glimpse of what we can do if you'll join with us in this campaign. Watch this.

On the mission field

Ralph: We've been here in Cambodia now with our team for about a week listening to stories from mothers, just story after story. And there seems to be one common theme -- heartbreak. In fact, just this morning we heard another one of those stories here. I'd like to share that with you right now.

Open Captions:

>> I had seven children. Five of them have died. It's very hard that I have to give dirty water to my children. But there is no choice. We always get sick, mostly with diarrhea. My youngest baby died last year. She was two years old. Right before she was about to die, I said to her, "Why baby? Why weren't you born with another family... in another place with a better situation than mine? Why were you born with me?"

Ralph: Sy was only doing what every mother loves to do, she was trying to nurture her

children. The very thing that should bring so much joy to her has brought so much heartbreak because she has had to give them dirty water.

Here's the good news. You and I have the ability to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to be a miracle in the lives of these people by drilling a well and bringing clean water to take the place of this dirty water that's been bringing so much heartache. We can bring clean water that will bring life to these children and give joy to these mothers. We can be that change.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I honestly can't imagine the pain of a mother to have to bury five children. Not only that, to actually love your children so much that you wish they actually hadn't been born to you because if they had been born to another mother in another country their lives would have been different.

I have walked with these moms and their children down to the only place where they can get water and I've watched as they got buckets full of this filthy water and it is not just that it is dirty water, it is disease-infested. It is the only choice they have. They give their children that water or they give their children no water at all.

But I've also been in the villages where we have been able to put a water well. The amazing thing is when we put a well in a village, the reason we call it Water for LIFE is do you know it lasts for the whole life of the village -- 70 years!

So even though I have seen the heartache I think it is very ironic that that beautiful mom's name is Sy. But I want her to know her sigh has gone up to heaven, that God has heard her and that you and I get the privilege of saying, "No more children, Sy. You're not going to bury one more child."

Randy, it really doesn't take that much for you and I to make a difference.

Randy: No. It wouldn't be asking too much to drill a well just for that mother and her family. But one well will actually service an average of 1,000 people their whole lives. One well costs \$4,800 on average. Can you provide one well? If you can I would encourage you to do it. Go online, pick up the phone and do it. For a lot of people that's a lot of money, I understand but you can partner with other viewers. \$48 will provide water for a lifetime for ten people. It's something all of us can do.

We have some gifts to give to you to say thank you and to commemorate your support. But the important thing, Sheila is to understand that as believers we're not just recipients of God's goodness we are expressions of his goodness. The water of life he gives to us we give both spiritually and literally to those around the world in desperate need and it does make a huge difference.

Sheila: Here's what Barry and I, my husband and I have decided to do. We have decided every month we're going to skip something. So for me it might be skipping like a pedicure. I mean I can paint my own nails. But when you do something like that then you have that money to be able to give. Randy and I cannot change that but our prayer here at *LIFE Outreach International* is this year we want to put 400 new wells in. The joy that that will bring just if you and I decide we're going to skip something we don't really need anymore.

So please would you go to your phone? Would you dial that number on the screen? Call that number, go online, give the best gift and together we can change the world.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today a mother living in extreme poverty will do the unthinkable: give her children dirty, diseased-filled water that she knows could kill them. With no other choice, what's a mother to do?

With your help, clean water is on the way. Mission: Water for Life provides a new beginning for thousands of children and their families; a bright future with better health.

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 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 life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift we'll send you *The Miracles of Christ; What Living Beyond Impossible Looks Like*. Filled with scriptures, prayers, and stories of Jesus' miraculous power, James Robison adds insight about how to walk in faith and live beyond the impossible.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the Morning and Evening coffee mug set. Each mug features beautiful artwork and scripture from Psalm 92:2, a wonderful reminder of God's faithfulness each day.

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 beautiful Bridge of Faith framed

canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: Please continue to go to the phones, go online. You can make a difference. You can help save a life. I hope you appreciate the wonderful word we've heard today. I know I appreciate it. Would you join me in thanking Eric for being here and sharing such great gospel? Sheila, was that amazing?

Sheila: It was amazing. You know we mentioned he doesn't have a book or he doesn't have a ministry, well, you are a book. You are a book so I thank you so much.

Thanks for joining us. We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*!