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Week 45: Fall Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Lysa TerKeurst and Sheila Walsh

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. I'm Betty and this is James; and we have two wonderful guests!

James: I'm telling you and they are great guests and they're great writers and they're great speakers and communicators. Lysa TerKeurst is here. Sheila Walsh is here. This book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. If you could see the picture up close, she is upside down. It's not supposed to be that way. And Sheila is saying *It is Okay Not to be Okay*. I think Sheila is saying, "It's okay to be like this." So we're going to let these ladies talk to us. Would you welcome Lysa and Sheila to *LIFE Today*?

[Cheers & Applause]

Lysa, when we left, you were the last guest. We've had Sheila earlier in the week and you were telling everybody what happened physically when you just -- if it hadn't been for pain you're dead. Pain saved your life. It was the most horrific, indescribable. We won't go into details of everything they removed but you did say probably a lot of people would be better off if they had everything removed you had removed. Get rid of a lot of the wrong storage departments anyway.

[Laughter]

The point is that you then find out that you had cancer. But in the midst of all this, while all this is happening, your husband has been unfaithful. He allows you to tell your journey, which was terrible. Started to have some repair then backed up again and then you basically said you'd had it. Fed up. Right?

Lysa: Well, I didn't use those words.

[Laughter]

But that was the gist of the situation. Yeah. And then in the middle of all that, I found out that I had breast cancer. I think my first reaction when I found out I had breast cancer, in the midst of all the other hard things happening, honestly, my first reaction was God, there is going to be a lot of people that are real upset that you've now allowed this to happen.

[Laughter]

And I felt in my heart that God was going to give me a perspective that would give me a sense of his strength in the journey. I just didn't know how it would come. And it came in such a strange way because we had been working on our marriage and I thought we were at the place where we were about to renew our vows and then the addictions that he had been struggling with cycled back in and things fell apart again.

And that was the point at which I knew the story was going to come out. It was becoming more and more apparent to me that though I had kept our story private for 18 months that the story was going to come out. I had the hard choice to either react to someone else telling the story or for me to be the one to ask people for prayer, wrap it in that kind of tone and get out in front and let me share my own story. So I posted a blog telling the world what was going on and it was the hardest thing I have ever, ever done.

Now if Art were here today, here on the program today, he would say it was actually the best thing that ever happened to him because it forced him to face some things that before that he just hadn't faced. And that will be his story to tell one day.

James: Can I ask you, what was the response when it went out coming back to you? What was the feedback?

Lysa: Well, I feared that it would be a lot of condemnation, criticism. I just had this notion in my head of what the response would be. And it was quite the opposite. The church did what the church should do and they rallied and they prayed and they encouraged.

James: Don't you thank God? That must happen more often. That needs to become the consistent practice. You just thrill me.

To me, what you and your husband are going through is the supernatural work of God and in the supernatural effect of that even taking effect and then that coming back. Because it is going to take this kind of exchange to heal all the ills in our nation, the ills in the church. But once you shift to that, the healing is quite remarkable and miraculous; isn't it -- to actually watch?

Lysa: It is. And I don't want to make it more tidy than it is. Trust me. There have been years of me laying in my bed by myself weeping. And at 2:00 a.m. in the morning feeling like Jesus, today would be a really good day, this minute would be a really good minute for you to just come on back. Do you know what I'm saying? So I don't want to make it seem so hyper-spiritual all the time or super tidy because it wasn't. But I can trace God's hand of faithfulness; and every identification of his faithfulness big and small, that became me trading my fledgling strength for an acceptance of his strength.

The miraculous thing that happened with the cancer though is when I finally posted that blog, I took a sabbatical. My intention was to rest completely. I'm such a hyper person that lasted about three weeks and then I was like peeling the paint off my wall. I just couldn't stand it. So I decided to make all those appointments you never have time to make. It wasn't time for me to have another mammogram because I'd had so many clear mammograms but I went ahead and did it anyways. And that was the mammogram that came back. I never had a tumor. It was not detectable in any way. It was a flat line of cancer that they found. But because they found it right then they were able to do a double mastectomy surgery. I didn't have to have chemo. I didn't have to have radiation. The prognosis was great and I've been declared cancer free and I praise God for that; right?

[Applause]

But here's what I don't want you to miss. If my marriage would not have imploded for a second time I wouldn't have gone to get that mammogram. If I hadn't gone to get the mammogram I would probably be telling a different story today. So I just again, the faithfulness of God even in the midst of the heartbreak and the horrific -- I thought it was the worst thing that had ever happened to me again, and yet even in that God used it for good. And that's what it means when I'm learning not to rely on my own strength. It means identifying, don't miss those places of God's faithfulness even in the midst of the hurt and the heartbreak and the horrific because that's where you can gain his strength to help you.

James: Lysa has an incredible gift to communicate, as all of you are hearing -- and you are hearing. It is here in the book too. There is an anointing that is equal on her pen and her writing. It's supernatural. So when she walks with you through this journey you'll find yourself literally in the presence of the Lord. I believe more sensitive to his voice and his will and it can have a transforming effect.

Now Sheila, you've known her a long time. You know this journey. You know how shocking and what the effect has been and what's happened, and your book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*. But when you listen to her and you watch what's happening, tell me what's going on in your mind and what you would want viewers and people to hear.

Sheila: Well, honestly, it was devastating. Because Lysa is one of the most -- she is one of the strongest women I know, one of the best Bible teachers, one of the most consistently faithful people, someone who has always had a hunger to dive deeper into God's word. So when I first heard of what was going on with Art and then with her health, and then I'll never forget the night that Lysa, I don't remember if you called or texted to tell me about the breast cancer and it was like, Lord, you've got to be kidding? How much more can this one person bear?

But I have to say God trusts you with a lot. I think God -- there's times when the amount of pain

that she's gone through is an indication to me of the level that God trusts her with saying, "This is not going to be easy." And the thing I loved about everything that you did during your journey, when we would talk she never pretended like oh, praise God this is all wonderful. She was gut-level honest. I think that was such a beautiful thing to the Lord, a gift to the Lord.

Honestly, I say that to you, no matter what you are in right now, do not edit yourself. Don't think you have to say the right thing to God. He is your Father. He loves you. If you're in pain, tell him you're in pain. If you don't understand, tell him you don't understand. If you're disappointed with God, be honest enough to tell him that. Then I love what Psalm 34 says, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." I have to say the fragrance that has risen up with the crushing in Lysa's life is -- I cannot wait to see what God will do the rest of the years of your life. It will be beautiful.

[Applause]

James: How do you respond to what you just heard?

Lysa: Well, first of all, I think Sheila is one of those people you want in your life because I know when my faith get shaky I can go and stand on hers. If you don't have a friend like that, pray for a friend like that. Here's how you can identify that there is a safe person like Sheila has been for me, I know Sheila has prayed more words for me than she's talked about me or to me. That's how you know, that's that friend that you can go stand on their faith when you can't find footing in your own faith.

If you don't have a person like that in your life, I would say get Sheila's book because that is --

[Laughter]

I'm serious! Because that like, you may not be able to call Sheila at 2:00 a.m. but you can pick up her book and you can get the same things, the very same things that Sheila would say to me if I called her at 2:00 a.m., that's what you're going to find in the message of her book. She is real.

She is honest. She doesn't ever make you feel like you're not spiritual enough. I'm just so thankful. I'm thankful for the way that you communicate in person, in your messages and as a friend.

Sheila: Thank you, Lysa! Thank you.

Lysa: I treasure you.

[Applause]

Betty: I would like you to get both books because I think most of us, if we live very long we're going to say *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. I know I have in my life and on my journey and *It is Okay Not to be Okay*. So as we walk on our journeys because they're all going to have challenges, we're going to have tragedy possibly, loss in our life, but the one thing we know is God is true to his word in that he loves us, he will walk through it with us; and just like you said earlier, on an earlier show, God's ways, our ways are not necessarily God's ways. His plan is always better. I found that true in my life and I think if you hang on, cling to God, you will find that to be true in your life too.

James: You know one of the things I pray that all of you will somehow grasp and that is the importance of having a friend. Did you know that the number one call that comes to our phone center, you know we always ask people to help others but nearly 90 percent, always over 80 percent of the calls every day are not calls to our phone center to help somebody, they're calls for prayer. Many of them are challenges physically, but one of the main cries of the people who call in is, "I'm lonely. Would you please share?" Well, you better believe we will.

And the people who are in our prayer center, many of them, have been through unbelievable journeys of pain and have seen the miraculous work of God. Here's one of the things I say to our viewers over and over and I want you to hear this, if you're someone who is saying, "I've had trouble finding a shoulder to lean on or someone to talk to," well, I've asked everyone watching us, pray God will make you a shoulder for someone to lean on. I promise you this, if you'll start

saying, "God, make me someone's friend" you'll be surprised how many friends will show up who need you to be a friend but who will ultimately become your friend.

Could you two ladies say that you've observed that actually happening when people do decide I'm going to be willing to bear somebody's load, and then a lot of times doors open for them?

Lysa: Absolutely.

Sheila: And I think it is one of the great gifts of being a community, the body of Christ. That on days when I'm maybe not feeling so strong, knowing that I have a friend like Lysa and like you, Betty, I've watched you walk through unthinkable pain. I cannot -- I don't even want to go there. I don't want to think of what it is like to lose a child. But I've watched in the midst of that that you stand strong and you still love Jesus and you keep walking forward. I just want to thank you for the tremendous witness you are to the world that you can suffer the worst thing a mother can imagine and still walk on in faith.

[Applause]

James: I want to thank all of you who pray for us because you've held us up.

We're giving away Peter Pretorius's book, *Death Defying Faith* and I think that one of the greatest things that -- you ladies know, you've been here a lot. You're now part of *LIFE Outreach* and the *LIFE Today* staff, mission team, Sheila, but you've been here a lot, wouldn't you agree that our viewers are the most unbelievable people in the world about wanting to help?

Sheila: Phenomenal! And I've walked with Peter by those grave sites where children are buried in Angola and seen the desperation. But Peter always showed me the hope. The first bowl of food reverses the cycle from death to life -- that we can make it, I've seen it with my own eyes the difference that can be made.

James: See the thing I'd like for you all to know is that you are a safe place for our guests to

come and share their heart. You're a wonderful place for them to come and share their message, they're witness because they believe you'll carry it. When you take the mission outreaches like Peter Pretorius inspired, well, you just cried out. Because we were so moved, we said, "I think we'll just move over here and help you." He said, "Don't!" It wasn't that he didn't like us when he said, "Don't move over here." He said, "James, please don't! Don't! Please go back and ask people to help us so we can stay here and do the work."

Let me tell you something, you became miracle workers. You became the answer to not only to missionaries' prayers but a lot of moms' prayers for their children, and we praise God for that.

I want to say this to you, these two ladies appreciate your love and your prayers. You pray for them and the challenges that they face. You pray for their ministries. You pray for everything God's called both of them to do and just know that they are also praying for you.

Would you join Betty and me saying thanks to Sheila and to Lysa? And their books are in the bookstores, Sheila's and Lysa's. And I'm telling you, you're not going to be bored. You're going to be inspired and moved.

I want to do something that I know both of you want us to do. I want to show our viewers where they can put loving arms around children and give them life now and life eternal because we lead these people to the Lord. When you show them love and you give them life, they can hardly wait to experience personally the source of that life. It's beautiful! Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: Another sunrise in Angola, getting ready for a long week in the bush. As Randy Robison and the mission team travel deeper into remote areas, thoughts come to mind about what lies ahead in the next few days.

[Children singing]

Randy: When we come into an area like this, we come in here and the first thing we heard was singing. Why? Because of this. This is the Mission Feeding program in action and we're putting a smile on their faces.

Announcer: As the mission team travels further they enter villages where there is no joy, no singing because they don't have a feeding program. Crops have failed because of drought and mothers are struggling to just keep their children alive.

Randy: This is Cecilia. She just buried her four-year old son, Pedro. Unfortunately, that's not uncommon around here. Just in the two days we've been here, we've seen five deaths.

Announcer: Things turn from bad to worse as the team made their way to a malnutrition clinic. A day Randy will never forget. He arrived at the sound of mothers wailing over the loss of their children who had just died.

Randy: What do you do? What do you say to a mother who has just lost a child? I can't imagine. All I could do is hold her hand and pray. Pray that God would comfort her.

Announcer: Angola has one of the highest mortality rates in the world for children under the age of five due to the effects of malnutrition. Graves like these echo the heartache of countless families devastated by this silent killer.

Randy: They have dug these graves because they know they are expecting death. But I am expecting life because I know that Mission Feeding saves lives. We can stop all of this death by putting food into a bowl.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Our children have been to the mission fields, grandchildren have been there, and every time they say it changes their lives. Betty, when you watch, of course, you've seen our son there, you've watched our family, you've seen how it has impacted their lives. But when you see the need and the heartache and then you know what feeding does, what's going on in your mind?

Betty: As I was watching that and I saw the smiles on their faces whenever they got their bowls with some food in it, it wasn't a frown because that's not what I wanted. I wanted a hamburger. I wanted something different. They were so grateful just to have something to feed the children, something to give them. Those children were smiling like they'd had a steak put before them or anything, what we would consider gourmet or something like that. No, it was just a bowl of nutritious porridge, James that would help them, help them to survive, help them to live, help those mothers not have to bury their babies.

What a difference we can make. We have made that difference before. But here's another need and I know you're going to step up and you're going to join with us. Let's put some food in the bowls for those children. Let's look for the smiles.

James: As you were trying to describe it, it is a porridge. It is almost like an oatmeal base but in each area the scientists and nutritionists work with our missionaries and they analyze the nutritional needs in that particular area, that region for what is lacking, and then they mix it in to the nutritious mix.

Our mix is so effective that the United Nations asked us if we would make food for them, the U.N. did. U.S.A.I.D. asked us. We can't. We can't keep up with what we've got our hands on. But it is so effective and it is effective because of the love of God flowing through these missionaries.

And then the very fact that we can do it and continue it is because of viewers of *LIFE Today*. And this was the shocking thing. Peter Pretorius said, "If you could just get us some help so we could stay here and do the work."

When I came home and asked, I had no idea nearly 30 years ago what you would do. Well, what you have done is you're now approaching 15 million lives saved by the feeding program alone, not even counting all of the well drilling and all of the beautiful water wells, over 6,000 of those. You have reached out in love and worked miracles.

Would you right now take your bankcard? Please, go get it. Go online to the website or dial that number and would you make the best gift you can? \$30, \$50 or \$100 we can feed three, five or ten children for the next months. If there is any way you can help us feed ten please do -- 400,000 is a lot of kids. We have a limited time in which to raise the money to cover these months. Would you please, would you right now get that card? Would you make the gift? Or if you want to send a check in make it to *LIFE*. But please call us and tell us you're sending it. Would you do that?

We have some gifts to send you. Peter Pretorius's wonderful life story; some beautiful, beautiful pens that you will love; and also, the wonderful painting by Thomas Kinkade. Please follow the leadership of God and reach out and touch someone with his love. Please do it! Thank you so much.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In impoverished and drought-stricken areas of Africa, children are suffering. The need is great and without food they face severe malnutrition -- even death.

Through *LIFE*'s Mission Feeding outreach you can save lives by feeding and caring for children currently suffering in parts of Angola, Mozambique, and South Sudan. With previous reserves gone and Mission Feeding helping in areas with severe crop failure, we urgently need your support to replenish food supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us.

Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. With your gift of any amount we'll send you *Death Defying Faith*, the

extraordinary life of miracle man, Peter Pretorius. This autobiography, completed just days before his unexpected death, chronicles the thrill-seeking adventures of missionary, Peter Pretorius. You will love reading how God took this ordinary man and performed extraordinary miracles throughout all of Africa.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the beautiful "Faith and Hope" pen set; two beautifully crafted pens featuring the key words of Hebrews 11:1; a key verse for every believer especially when facing adversity, trials and challenges.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request the "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I say in behalf of just 400,000 children and their families that are going to be grateful, thank you. The book, *Death Defying Faith*. I promise you, you'll find this as a very inspirational book. Remember Lysa's book is in the bookstores and so is Sheila's. I promise you, they will be a blessing to you.

Join me and Betty in thanking Sheila and thanking Lysa. Thank you, ladies! You really are a blessing. Thank you.

Thank all of you for watching. Thanks so much for your help. Encourage your friends to watch *LIFE Today* every day -- and share *LIFE Today*.