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Week 46: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

"God is More Interested in What We are Becoming"

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I was up in Canada not so long ago and a young girl asked if she could talk to me at the end. She said, "I'm really confused. I went to seminary because I really believed that God wanted me to be in full time ministry. I thought I was going to be a woman speaker. I've been rehearsing and practicing and nothing has happened. No doors have been opened and I'm wondering what I'm doing wrong."

I understood that. It can be frustrating if you feel that God has gifted you in a particular way or you have a special calling but it seems like the doors just keep slamming. You think, well, Lord, I know you spoke to me about this. I know you showed me this.

I don't think there is any story in scripture that illustrates that more clearly than the story of Joseph. Remember Joseph? He was a young boy. You can read about him starting in Genesis Chapter 37. He's 17 years old. He is the youngest of the children and he knows without a doubt that he has a calling on his life. But unfortunately, at that point he doesn't really have the character to sustain the calling.

He goes ahead, you might remember, and tells his brothers, "I had this dream that you're all like stalks and you all bend down and bow to me and I stand there."

And they're like, "Are you kidding?" They just get more and more disgusted with this

younger brother who isn't made to do any kind of manual work because he is his dad's favorite.

It just goes from bad to worse. Then one day the dad asks Joseph to take some food to the brothers and just see how they're doing. It was a long way. It was about 100 miles he had to go. When they see him coming, they determine, you know what? We've had it with this guy. So they think what they're going to do is kill their own brother and then just send word back to the dad that a wild animal may have got him. The oldest brother, Ruben, he didn't want that to happen.

So they put the boy, remember they threw Joseph into a well for a while to decide what they were going to do. Then they saw some traders going off to Egypt and they decided, well, instead of killing him, we don't have to have his blood on our hands. We could just sell him to the traders. And then we'll just go back and tell our dad we don't know what happened but something awful must have happened to him.

Now put yourself in Joseph's place. If you know without a shadow of a doubt that God has given you a special gift, that somehow you're going to be ruling and doing amazing things, what happens to that vision when you find yourself at the bottom of a pit? You know the interesting thing? If you read it for yourself it says, "And God was with him." If you're like me, I tend to think, well, if God is with me, things like that are not going to happen.

Well, he gets to Egypt and he is sold as a slave into the house of a man named Potiphar. Well, Joseph works really, really hard and eventually he is promoted. He becomes head of the whole household. But he's in for another tremendous disappointment. Potiphar's wife decides that she wants to sleep with this young man and he refuses to do it. The reason he gives is so honorable. He says, "How can I do that and dishonor your husband, my master who is given me everything apart from you? And how could I dishonor my God?" So he does the right thing and ends up in prison anyway.

When you're in a place like that you're tempted to think, God is not with me. Life is out of control. What Joseph didn't understand at that time, and one of the lessons I've been learning, God is far more interested in who we are becoming than what we are doing. All those years in the prison prepared Joseph to be the man of character that God knew he was going to be. Watch this.

Begin video clip

Sheila: When God has a plan for your life we think, well, if that can happen by Tuesday and then by the next week if this could happen that would be great. We don't know that God is far more interested in who we are becoming than what we are doing. Joseph didn't know that while he was in prison he was learning the language. He couldn't survive in an Egyptian prison just speaking his own language. So over those years in prison he learned the language. He served the jailer so much that the jailer put him in charge of all the other prisoners.

See when God is ready to say "now" it happens in a moment; all those years of faithfully serving God. And the interesting thing is every time when it seems to be going wrong, like when he was thrown in the well, when he was thrown in jail we read this, "And the Lord was with him." See we think, well, if the Lord was with me, surely this would not be happening. No! "And the Lord was with him."

And in that moment when Pharaoh cannot interpret a dream and one of his people say, "Hey, actually I was in prison with a guy who is really good at that." In a moment Joseph is brought out of prison and he is made prime minister of Egypt. That is the way God is. "You intended to harm me but God intended it for good."

See here's what's beautiful about the work you see God having done in Joseph's life. What he told them when he was 17 just happened. I mean they've come and they need food and they realize this is Joseph so they're on their knees bowing. Joseph could have said, "I told you! Remember? I told you you'd do that." No! He didn't do that. He said, "You intended to harm me but God." See those two words, they change everything.

You may have been betrayed by somebody but God. You may have been abandoned by someone you loved and you think it is out of control -- but God. You may think right now everything is wrong, everything is out of control -- but God.

Let me remind you of some of our God's names. Elohim: The strong creator God. Two words, El Roi: The God who sees me. You think God doesn't see what's going on right now? He doesn't take his eyes off you. You're struggling financially, you're struggling with your health, you're struggling with your children, you're struggling in your marriage and you think, nobody knows. El Roi: The God who sees me. El Shaddai: God Almighty. Jehovah Shalom: The God of peace. It is possible to know peace in the middle of a storm because of Jesus.

You can be in the hardest days of your life and know the peace of Christ because Jesus said, remember in that last conversation with his closest friends? He said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you." See for the peace that the world gives to work somebody's got to change. When there is peace talks there has to be compromise, somebody has to shift, the situation has to change. Not with Jesus! You can be in the middle of a war and know the peace of Christ -- Jehovah Shalom.

Jehovah Rapha: The God who heals. And then the greatest name, Adonai: Lord of all. Not just lord of some things, he is Lord of all. And that's why, when we read Psalm 46:10, when we read that Psalm, "Be still and know that I am God" we can let go. Because no matter how things seem, God is in control.

I want us to look at how do we rise above disappointment? We live in a world where disappointment is part of life. I was reading the other day in Romans -- I love the book of Romans. If you haven't read it recently do yourself a favor and make yourself a nice cup of tea and just settle in with the book of Romans. So much beautiful truth!

But this is what Paul writes in Romans five, verses three through five: We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems. That's not our natural human response. We don't necessarily go, "A problem! Yahoo!"

[Laughter]

But Paul is showing us that this is what it looks like when you actually believe that God is in control and that God is good and God is for you. "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment.

Our hope in Christ is not wishful thinking. It is like I can start a new diet and say, "I hope I stick to this."

[Laughter]

This is not that kind of hope. The hope that we have in Christ is not wishful thinking, it is a hope that you can stake your life on. It will not disappoint.

Some things in life are disappointing but they're not huge. Like maybe you support a team and your team loses or they discontinue your favorite TV show. Or you've just found a shade of lipstick that works and they stop making it. But other disappointments can be devastating and they leave us on the floor.

I wasn't sure I'd ever be able to be pregnant because I was older and Barry is seven years younger than me which he likes to remind me of regularly. But he is so good with kids. I said to Barry, "If you want a big family, you might have to find somebody younger than me." He said, "No, no. We'll believe God for whatever God wants to put in our arms."

So when I became pregnant when I was 39 I was just over the moon. They told us it was

going to be a little boy. I was so happy about that because I'm not a very girly-girl. My sister is. My sister was more into ribbons and lace. I was more into climbing trees. And so the thought of having a boy was like, oh this is so great!

Well, three months into my pregnancy our doctor called us in. She wanted me to go through some tests for some things. She used a phrase that I'd never heard before. She said, "I'm so sorry to tell you this but your son is not compatible with life."

I was like, I'm sorry. I don't know what you mean."

She said, "There is something seriously wrong with your son and he's not going to be able to survive outside the womb." She said, "My advice to you is that you terminate this pregnancy tomorrow."

I was like, "Absolutely not."

She said, "Then you're going to have to come in regularly for fetal monitoring. We're going to have keep an eye on your boy and see how far along we can get you."

And we drove home in silence and Barry went into the house. But I took the car. We were living in California at the time and I took the car down to the beach. And I sat on a rock where I used to go every morning with my Bible and a cup of coffee. I talked to this little one. I said to him, "I don't know if you heard that. But I want you to know, I'm going to fight for you. I'm going to fight for every breath that God has ordained you to take."

I have to tell you, it was hard. When you think you've been given this amazing gift and then you think it is going to be taken away. But I had to keep going back to the Word of God. See, I've stood on platforms for years before that and told people, "I know you're walking through a tough season but God is for you, he is with you. I know you don't understand this sickness but I believe God is good and God is in control."

And suddenly, when I faced this, it was as if the Lord said, "Now Sheila, do you understand everything that you've been saying? Do you believe that I am good and that I am God? I'm not going to tell you what is going to happen. When you don't know, in this season of not knowing, will you trust me?"

I cannot tell you how many nights I would be on the floor on my knees, tears rolling down my face but saying, "Yes, Lord! I trust you."

We got as far along as 20 weeks, and then we got to 30 weeks. When we got to 37 weeks my doctor called me and she said, "I need you to come back into the office."

I said, "Is there something else wrong?"

She said, "No."

I said, "Listen. I'm not coming in. If you have something to tell me, just tell me it now."

She said, "Well, the day your results came back from some tests, the results of another 40-year old patient came back and your results went into her chart and her results went into your chart and there's never been anything wrong with your child."

And even as I was about to just rejoice, I suddenly realized there is another woman getting a very different phone call. I believe in the sovereignty of God. You can't be sovereign some of the time. God is sovereign all the time. I've often wondered if the Lord allowed me to carry that woman's burden.

And now when I look at our son, 21 years old, about to get into medical school; wants to be a doctor in countries where they can't afford doctors because he believes medicine and ministry should go hand in hand. I believe the enemy intended to take that boy's life before he was ever born.

But just as we choose to fight, God has fought for us. God has fought for us. I love Psalm 34, verse ten says this: Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry but those who trust in the Lord will lack no good thing.

Sometimes our understanding of what a "good thing" is is different than what the Lord has for us.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: True, but it is hard sometimes, isn't it because we think we know what's best. Let me ask you, have you ever prayed a prayer and in retrospect you're grateful that God didn't answer? Because sometimes we think that we know what's going on and we know what God should do, but when you learn to rest in God's timing and his sovereignty and his love and under his protective care, often then we look back and see, oh my gosh! Lord, I had no idea but now I see your fingerprints all over it.

That's one of the lessons. This is the book I wrote, *It's Okay Not to be Okay*: Moving forward one day at a time. I'd love to get a copy to you. I'll tell you a little bit later how we can do that. But I just want to remind you that if God has put a dream in your heart, if God has deposited something... the scripture says God gives us the desires of our heart. I think there's two sides to that. I think initially he gives us that desire and then in his perfect timing he unfolds that desire. So don't give up on your dream. If God has shown you something and you really believe, rest in his time but do what Joseph did, keep being who you are in the midst of it. By the time that Joseph was out of prison his character matched his calling. So don't give up. Don't lose hope. Don't get discouraged. God is with you and in his timing he will reveal the next step for you.

One of my great privileges here at *LIFE Today* is to be able to be part of our Mission

Feeding. Do you know this is our 30th anniversary? Thirty years of helping now, literally, millions of children across Africa. What we've committed to every year is to feed 400,000 children. I've seen the before and I've seen the after. I've seen what it looks like when children have no food and I've seen what it looks like when one bowl of food makes a difference. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Open Captions:

>> We're asking this lady here if she can talk about -- she lost, I think she had three children -- four children.

Was it a sickness or was it hunger?

[Interpreter asking question.]

Open Captions:

Interpreter: Yeah, it was the hunger.

1st Woman: I had four children who died. I took them to the hospital but they couldn't help. They died because of hunger.

2nd Woman: I lost three children. They died from hunger and a lack of medicine.

Sheila: I know when I've seen pictures like malnourished children -- severely malnourished children before I've thought it's too late. There is nothing I can do. But what I discovered while I was here is that with the first bowl of food you reverse the process. The minute nutrition begins to enter the body of a child, it is as if death turns the corner and life marches in.

It is amazing what every single one of us can do. So you might look at these pictures and

think like I did, this is overwhelming. It might seem that way but that's just a lie of the enemy. This is fixable. We can do this. We can turn from death to life in a moment.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Doesn't it seem obscene to you that children are dying from hunger in this day and age? It is so wrong. When you think of the irony that most of us are trying to lose weight. We spend so much money on fad diets and books and just across the world mothers are having to bury their children. It is heartbreaking.

But for 30 years here at *LIFE Today*, we've made this determination and it is because you've helped us. We showed you the initial vision of here's what we can do and you absolutely stepped in and said, "Yeah! We will partner with you."

James and Betty have told me so many stories of being able to see the difference in a village and then I had the privilege myself. Walking into a malnutrition clinic is literally the most heartbreaking thing I've ever seen in my life. And to see the despair in a mother's eyes! I can't imagine what it is like to hear your children cry during the night simply because they are hungry. It shouldn't happen. But the good news is you and I are here. We can do something about it.

So here's what we're asking for. Our commitment to those children in Africa, to their parents, to the partners that we work with is that we commit this year we will continue to feed 400,000 children. And every little bit helps. Do you know that if you can commit today to \$30 that will feed three children for three whole months? \$50 will feed five children. \$100 will feed ten.

It is amazing now for any gift that you give we have this amazing book by Peter Pretorius, *Death-Defying Faith*. And trust me, this is the story of a man who was afraid of

nothing. He lived out of the fear of the Lord. We'd love to send that to you.

But if each one of us does something we can change this. Some of you can give more. If you can give \$1,000 do you know that you will feed 100 children for three whole months? It is a way of redeeming their lives. Because we serve the food at school so the children will come to school to get a bowl of food and then to learn, to break the cycle of poverty. I don't want these moms to bury one more child. If they lived next door to you, you would help them in a moment. But through the beauty of technology and television we can bring them right into your home and we can be an answer to their prayers.

So please, would you call the number on your screen? Would you do it today? I know sometimes we think, well, I'll get to that later. But the need is now and the need is desperate. You can go online. But please, would you give the very best gift you can? What a joy to think that we've reached our hands across the world, taken the hand of a mother and said, "You're not alone. We're going to help you." Please would you call now?

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

On the mission field

Sheila: Can you hear them coughing? Can you hear that deep chest cough? Because their resistance is so low that the least little thing becomes a serious life or death issue for these children.

I don't know if you realize that every time you pick up the phone and call, or every time you go online, these are the people whose lives you are changing. Our prayer is that we can save this little one. But my prayer is that we can save hundreds of other children before they get to this stage. No child should ever get to this stage. No mom should ever have to watch this.

So if we do something now, we can stop this from happening.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! If the lines are busy, please call again. I told you that for any gift at all we will send you my book, *It's Okay Not to be Okay*. I would love -- I would love to send you this book, Peter Pretorius's story, *Death-Defying Faith*. He had this passionate commitment to feed those who are hungry in Africa.

So again, thank you so much. If you tried to get through and you couldn't get through before, just persist. Just determine that we're going to make a difference in the lives of these children. It is such a privilege. And not only that, there are mothers today, literally on their knees in the dirt praying that someone will be an answer to their prayer. We get the joy of making sure it is us.

So for me, Sheila Walsh on *LIFE Today*, I'll see you next time.