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Week 44: Rescue Life: Last week

Sheila Walsh

"Face the What If's

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad you could join us.

If somebody asked you what's your pet fear? Like what's the thing like you're just like, oh no way! It might be spiders. It might be roller coasters. Well, for me growing up it was snakes. I had a thing about snakes. They just terrified me. I once saw this movie about a big snake that ate somebody and I was done.

Well, then you have a son and my son Christian, a couple years ago said, "Hey mom, do you think I could possibly get a snake?"

I'm like, "A snake?"

He was like, "Yeah. I found this beautiful ball python and he is so pretty." So my love for my son is greater than my fear of snakes, *marginally*. So he got this snake he called Ramen the Danger Noodle. I have no idea why. I actually learned through handling this little snake with my son to kind of put my fears on the back shelf.

But when I think about fears, I think about what are the fears that stop you from being the man, the woman that God maybe has called you to be? Maybe for example, you feel that you have a gift of teaching or you wish you could have a small group in your house or you want to do something for God but the thing that holds you back are the "what if's." What if I do this and it is a disaster? What if I reach out and I make a fool of myself?

One of the things I think is one of the most beautiful things about being in a relationship with Jesus Christ is we get to reach out and to try. And if we fail, big deal! We fall flat and we get to get up and start again. That's one of the reasons I wrote this book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*. One of the main chapters is simply called "Facing the what if's."

We had a group of our friends at *LIFE* came in and spent a couple of days with me and we basically worked our way through the eight steps. Maybe this is one that will connect particularly with you. Watch this.

Begin video clip

Sheila: Face the what if's even if you're afraid. One of my -- how many of you like the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*? You don't like *The Wizard of Oz*? Flying monkeys -- nightmares right here. Well, I love *The Wizard of Oz*. Really, I like it because of the Cowardly Lion. I just think he is adorable. One of my favorite quotes from *The Wizard of Oz* is this. The Cowardly Lion says, "All right! I'll go in there for Dorothy. Wicked witch or no wicked witch, guards or no guards, I'll tear them apart. I may not come out alive but I'm going in there. There is only one thing I want you fellas to do."

So the Tin Man and the Scarecrow ask, "What's that?"

The Cowardly Lion says, "Talk me out of it."

[Laughter]

I love that. I think it's great.

But fear -- fear is a very real thing. The what if's -- what if I do this and that happens? What if this happens? And I love this exhortation, Second Timothy 1:7. This is an exhortation from Paul to Timothy. It is the last thing Paul ever wrote and here's what he said, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and a sound

mind."

That's a promise. Fear is real. We all face things that make us just want to quit at some point. We think, what if I fail? What if I try this or what if I apply to this new thing and people don't like me? What if I actually apply for something and I get the job and then I can't do it? What if I start a Bible study in my home and nobody comes? What if they come and they ask a question and I don't know the answer? All the what if's that can hold us back from being the men and women that God has called us to be.

A few years before I came here to *LIFE Outreach* I was in Kenya working with another mission organization. We'd had an incredible trip but at the end of the trip our host said, "Would you like to have an all-day Safari out to see all the animals?"

I was so excited because I don't like zoos and I don't like circuses because I always think, it's so hard to see a lion -- I mean I know sometimes -- I'm not against them. So don't write to me because you run a zoo. It's just there is something beautiful about seeing them in their natural habitats.

So I got up really early that morning and I was sitting in the Jeep ready to go and the driver had a gun. I asked him what that was for. He said, "I'll tell you later." So we started out and the very first things we saw... We turned a corner and suddenly this huge, I don't know if it was a pack, it's really not a pack. Zebra -- what is it? A herd -- well, there was a herd -- a herd and a half actually.

[Laughter]

It was amazing and they looked... We were so close they looked like they'd been freshly painted, just black and white and black and white. It was beautiful! And then we saw a giraffe. And they're so gentle and graceful. Then later on in the day we got close to the Mara River and there were these humongous hippos. So I thought it would be good if I started singing: Mud, mud, glorious mud. And the driver told me to be quiet.

And I said, "Well, can we get a bit closer?"

He said, "Not if you'd like to live."

I had no idea that they're one of the most dangerous animals in Africa.

So the only thing we hadn't seen, and I was a little disappointed, was a lion. I really wanted to see a lion like in its natural habitat. But the sun was starting to go down and we were going back to the hotel. Then we suddenly, standing by itself, we saw a single impala which you never see. They're always in herds together. It was this single impala and it was frozen to the spot. I said to the driver, "What's wrong with it? Why is it not moving?"

The driver said, "Look over there."

And I looked in the clearing at the trees and there was a lion. And the impala had been separated from the rest and knew the lion was there and was absolutely frozen.

But here's the interesting thing he told me. An impala can run twice as fast as a lion but it's fear that freezes it to the spot. Isn't that fascinating? If that impala had just got out of there the lion didn't have the hope of catching it but fear had that poor animal frozen to the spot.

I think sometimes fear can be a good thing. Fear can protect us at times but like that impala, it can paralyze us. I saw that in myself in 1996. I was invited to join a conference called Women of Faith. Now up until that point I had never spoken in my life. When I graduated from seminary in London I worked with the B.B.C. for a few years. I co-hosted a live rock show called "The Rock Gospel Show." I was a contemporary Christian artist. And then I worked for the 700 Club for five years. But the thought of standing on a stage with a microphone and talking to a bunch of women terrified me!

So when he called, and Steve Arterburn who was the founder of Women of Faith said, "We've started this small thing for women. We've gotten Barbara Johnson and Lucy Swindoll and a couple of others and we'd love for you to join the team."

I said, "Absolutely not!"

But he kept calling back. Then he came up with the lowest blow, he said, "Would you pray about it?" So I did. Barry and I both prayed about it. And Christian was just -- I was still pregnant at the time. So for the first conference, Christian would be six weeks old. But the more we prayed about it, the more we felt the Lord say, "Yes." So I said, "Okay."

I would love to tell you that I got on the platform and it was as if Charles Spurgeon had shown up himself. It was awful! It was a huge arena and they had these big jumbotrons so you can see. Well, I didn't know they were there and halfway through my message I suddenly caught sight of myself.

[Laughter]

It was like I looked like a monster. It was huge! I started to laugh. Then I noticed that the back of my hair was all wonky. It was just... A disaster!

I remembered all the things that had made me say no. Well, what if I can't remember my message? What if I freeze on stage? If only! I just kept talking instead. What if I say something that's not in the Bible? What if I need to use the restroom halfway through my message?

[Laughter]

But you know, 25 years later I understand now what I didn't understand then. It's never

been about you and I getting it right. It's about showing up and letting God do what only he can do.

I remember Chuck Swindoll giving me some advice. He said, "Hey, don't worry. The key to ministry is two words: Show up." And there is something powerful about that. When we think, boy, we've got it together and we've got something to give the world, then we probably should stay home and have a nap. But when you realize, Lord, here I am. And you let God do what only God can do.

When I was a young girl, one of my friends went to Israel on a trip and she brought me back this little necklace. It was a little glass ball and inside was a mustard seed. You know they're tiny. Inside was that scripture, Matthew 17:20: I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, move from here to there and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.

I spent probably the next 20 years thinking how impossible it was to move a mountain. But it is God who moves the mountain, we just need a tiny little bit of faith. See, I was concentrating on this huge obstacle and thinking there is no way.

I had the privilege some years ago, I don't know, did you ever meet Elisabeth Elliot? Elisabeth Elliot was an amazing woman. I had the privilege of interviewing her many times. I don't know if you know any of her story, or the story of her husband, Jim Elliot. He and four of his missionary friends had a passion to witness to a previously unreached people's group, the Auca Indians in Ecuador. They were known as a very violent group of people and no one had been able to reach them.

So what Jim and his four friends did, they had a small plane and for weeks they would circle over the beach close to where the Indians were and they would drop little packages. They would drop some food and they had some notes written in what they hoped was the right language and they would drop those. And they prayed and they prayed, and when they felt like it was the right time they said, "Okay, Lord, today we believe that we're

going to have the opportunity to actually see these people face to face."

So one by one they were lowered from the airplane down onto the beach. Now if you know anything of the story, you know how things went that day. The Auca Indians came out of the jungle with spears and killed all five men. But here's what I didn't know. Elisabeth told me, Jim had a loaded gun in his pocket but he had made a promise to God that he would never take the life of an Auca Indian until they had heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. He could have taken that gun out and killed every single one of those men that were coming. But remember what he used to say? "He is no fool to lose what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose." So often we cling on to our life. Jim clung on to the very gates of splendor knowing that the moment that he and his friends hit the sand that day they were immediately in the presence of Christ.

Here's the interesting part of the story and the part that honestly, I don't think I could have done. Jim's wife, Elisabeth was left at that point with her ten-month old daughter, Valerie. I think apart from the intervention of God, I would have been on the first plane home. Not only had she lost her husband, not only had their four friends been murdered brutally, they got a little girl. I would have wanted to be home with friends and family. But what Elisabeth said was, "No. God sent us here as a family and the job's not finished."

She eventually moved into the area and she and one of the other gentlemen who died sister, together they led every single man who had killed their husbands into a relationship with Christ. Amazing! They stayed there until Valerie was three. And every single man in that tribe gave their lives to Jesus Christ. And one day Jim will get a chance to welcome them home.

I asked her, I was like, "Elisabeth, it is amazing. But can I ask you a couple of questions? Because it just seemed... The first part, once you've seen that God's moving and people are coming to Christ, but how do you get there? How do you go back there to the very men who murdered your husband?" And I said to her, "What did you do?"

She told me, "Here's the deal. Back then my life was completely controlled by fear." And every time she wanted to step out in faith and make a move toward getting closer to these people fear stopped her every time. She said but then her best friend told her something that changed her life.

Her friend said, "Why don't you do it afraid?" See she was waiting, as I would have been, for the fear to go and the faith to rise. Her friend said, "Why don't you step out and do it afraid? And see what God will do."

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Isn't that amazing? Just do it afraid! Elisabeth was waiting 'til she felt she had the courage to be able to go to those very people that had taken her husband's life. And understandably, she was terrified. But she began to understand a life-changing principle that when Christ is with you... Remember what the Psalmist, David said in Psalm 27, verse one: The Lord is my light and my salvation. Who shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? Sometimes it's as we walk out in faith with our fears that we see the way that the Lord can deliver us in those places.

I don't know what might be in your heart or maybe something, a dream that you had at some point in your life and you think, I would love to do that but I'm so aware of my own human limitations. That's a perfect place to start. Whenever you think, well, I've got this! Usually we're in trouble. I'm so moved by our brother, the Apostle Paul when he talked about the fact that even though he'd had this blinding revelation of the risen Christ, even though he had this amazing encounter where he was taken up to a place he calls "paradise" and saw things he couldn't tell us about because they're too great, that he was honest enough to say, "I prayed that God would take away this thorn in my flesh but God showed me that his strength is made perfect in weakness."

So whatever you feel is on your heart that God may be calling you to, take Elisabeth, take our sister's advice and do it afraid. One of the things I love to do a little afraid is to go into some countries where there is a lot of danger but there is a lot of need and with Christ we can go into those places and say in Jesus' name we are here to reach you, to rescue you, and to restore you. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Sheila: I'm staying with our crew at a really nice, what I would consider kind of higher end hotel in Southeast Asia. But every single one of us last night had a card slipped under our door, very clearly offering sexual services. It is just -- I consider it an absolute hellish onslaught here in Southeast Asia.

Very young girl in the picture made up as if she was smiling. But we have talked to these girls and their life is not one that they smile about. In fact, I was told by one of the girls, if we don't smile then we are punished. We are physically beaten up.

Open Captions:

>> My friend told me about a restaurant where I could work. I was brought into a room and given a soft drink. After I drank it, I became unconscious. When I woke up, I was alone in a room with a client. The men later threatened me, and said not to tell anyone what they had done to me.

Sheila: There's such pronounced evil here and that's why I think that our presence here, bringing the light and the fragrance of Christ and the message of the gospel is so important. It is so critical that we are here reaching out in Jesus' name now.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: That little girl, that sweet little girl I'm hugging there, she is 11 years old. Let me just give you a little context to understand what's happening there because maybe you're thinking, why do they get involved with that at all? So often these are the poorest of the poor families. And if one gets sick, the mom or the dad get sick and they have to get medicine, they have no money so they have to take out a loan. And then when the people come back and they want their money, they don't have it because the interest is made up and up and up. You know the way that goes. So the only choice some of these girls have is to go out on the street.

Now technically they go out to try and gather cans up because they can sell like eight cans for a quarter. But what so often happens as you saw in that piece is that they're taken by some friendly person, "Would you like a soft drink?" "Would you like a meal? You look hungry." And the food or the drink is drugged. And that 10, 11, 12-year old girl wakes up in a horrible room with some man she's never met in her life before and realizes that precious gift of waiting for the one that she's meant to marry has been robbed from her. And from that moment on these girls feel hopeless, they feel used.

And it was such a severe mercy, is the only way I can describe it, to go and spend time. You might be asking, well, why are you sitting in a van? Some of the areas are incredibly dangerous. When we felt we could get out then we would get out and walk; and Janice and I would just be praying up and down the street, praying for God to intervene. And then we would find a quiet place where some of the local people we work with there would say, "You can come. It is a safe place to meet with these girls here."

But so many of these places, the streets are so dangerous. One little girl I talked to said she was literally walking home and two guys in a motorbike reached down and grabbed her and the next thing she knows she wakes up beside some 50-year old drunk man. She is just a child.

You and I ask change this. This is not a hopeless case. If you look at it just from the

world's point of view, it is like, hey, why bother? Every single person is born in the image of God, the Imago Dei. And if you and I don't determine that this is not going to happen on our watch, who will?

So we have set up this amazing way that we can do it. We call it Reach: Get to the villages and teach these children before they're taken captive. Rescue, go into the places where they're being held and get them out of there. And then restore. Help them to understand who they are in Christ.

But we need you to work with us. Our goal, this is our last week, we thought we would be able to reach 2,500 children this year but then some of our friends said, "No, we care about this." So a \$320,000 matching gift came in. So that means that you and I in this season, we can rescue 5,000 children -- 5,000! It used to be that if you gave \$128 you would rescue one child but now there's going to be a matching gift. So if you can give \$128 you're going to rescue two children who are literally right now begging God to help. If you can only do \$64, now with a matching gift together with a brother or sister in Christ, you've rescued a child. Our goal is 5,000 children rescued because we have this amazing \$320,000 matching gift.

But we need you to do something today. This is our last week, would you go to your phone? Would you give the very best gift you can?

[Begin video clip]

Announcer: Behind the bright lights there is a darkness where a world of violence and sexual abuse runs rampant scarring the souls of millions of young children. With their bodies broken and hopes crushed, these children are trapped in a never-ending nightmare.

With your help, *Mission: Rescue Life* can shine the light of God's love in this dark world to reach, rescue and restore children and young people to the beauty God designed for

them to enjoy. With a generous opportunity of a \$320,000 matching gift, your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child will be matched to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 rescue gift will be doubled to \$64! With your gift of any amount today, we will send you the *Names of God* prayer journal. From Adonai to Yahweh, this journal is filled with beautiful photographs to help you reflect on 31 different names of God found throughout scripture. With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the *Names of God* Bible. This special edition NIV large print Bible is engraved with the many names of God; a beautiful reminder that the God we serve is infinitely good.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,280 which will now help rescue 20 children 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

Sheila: Thank you so much! This is our last week. We are going back to those areas but I want to go back knowing that we are bringing help. And we have this phenomenal matching gift, \$320,000. So if you're able to give \$64, that will be matched and you will be able, with a brother in Christ or sister in Christ, to rescue one child. If you can give \$128 that will be matched and you will know that two children have been rescued.

For any gift at all, I would be honored, I'd love to send you my new book. If you can send us \$128, we will send you this beautiful Bible, *The Names of God* and a journal where you can write down the things that you were maybe a little afraid of but then as you began to realize how big our God is that you began to move forward in faith and saw God do some amazing things.

So please last week, please call today and make the very best gift possible. I'm Sheila

Walsh saying thank you for being with us. God bless you!