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Week 47: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

How Do You Handle Disappointment

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. So glad you tuned in. Let me ask you something. What do you do when you feel disappointed? How do you deal with disappointment? Obviously, there are different levels. You can be disappointed in your football team. Well, I'm determined that this is going to be the Cowboy's year! Or you can be disappointed when you have a favorite shade of lipstick and they suddenly discontinue it. But some disappointment, it's a lot more than that. Sometimes it can be the loss of a marriage, it can be the loss of a job, it can be the loss of a dream. What do you do when you just feel let down? How do you handle disappointment?

When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, this is Chapter 5, he wrote this. This is verses three through five: 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.

The kind of hope that we have in Christ is not wishful thinking. It is not saying oh, I hope that this diet works or I hope I can make that deadline. The hope that we have in Christ is absolutely rock-solid. But sometimes when life intervenes and things happen that we did not see coming, it can really shake us.

Not so long ago I was up in Canada and I met a woman who shared with me the story not of a slight disappointment but of a devastation. But it was one more opportunity for me to see that even in the midst of disappointment, Christ is so present. And sometimes in those hard places we learn things we would never learn any other way. Would you watch this?

Begin video clip

Sheila: Last year, Barry and I flew to Winnipeg, Canada. If you're watching, hi! We love you! And they said it would be cold. There are degrees of cold. There is like, would you like a cold beverage or would you like your face to fall off in the first five minutes? Oh, my gosh! I've never been so cold. It was 20 below zero but with a wind chill of 40 below zero. It was unbelievable!

I remember in the morning trying to kind of curl my hair. I didn't want to look like Shirley Temple but I was trying to get that little wave in it. My hair had given up the will to live.

[Laughter]

I'd never been so cold in my life. And bone-dry air! Just the static -- it was just unbelievable.

But I was so excited to be there because I had just discovered that weekend there had never been a Christian women's conference in Winnipeg. And this darling woman came to a Woman of Faith conference in Minneapolis-Saint Paul one year. And as she watched all these women worshipping the Lord she thought, why can't we do this in Canada? She just began, one woman, praying, believing, God, you can do anything. So I had the privilege of going.

Women came from all over Canada. I can't remember how big the theater was but it was sold out. They had a waiting list of 300 people. When the woman picked me up at the airport, she was hilarious. She was like, "I've added a few things to the program."

I'm like, "okay, great!"

She said, "I know you're supposed to be speaking three times but do you think you could speak five times? Do you think you could have an altar call? And do you think you could have communion?"

I'm like, "Do any of you need to get married? Can we bury anyone while we are here?"

[Laughter]

But it was just glorious. It was so lovely. And the women, they just came ready. It was like they had their Bibles and their notebooks and their pens, and they were just leaning in. They wanted to know more about the goodness of God. At the lunch break they had sandwiches for all of us. This sounds hard to believe but the lettuce in my sandwich was frozen. It gave a whole new meaning to iceberg lettuce. It was frozen! So I decided to let my lunch thaw out and go out and talk to some of the women. It was lovely.

One woman came and she pulled her cell phone out and showed me a picture of her son. And he looked like maybe the exactly same age as Christian, just a handsome boy. As I was looking up to say, "Oh, what a handsome boy!" I saw the look in her eyes and it was like an ocean of sorrow. Her son had died a month before -- a month. I found myself thinking, how do you even get out of bed? How did you even manage to come here?

And she told me. She said, "I saw a poster in town and it said that this conference was about finding strength for this beautiful, broken life." She said, "I just saw the word *broken* and I came."

I hugged her while we both wept. And at the end, she took my face in her hands and she said, "Thank you." I thought, Lord, what on earth? What on earth could I give to this woman? What did you do? What did you in your own way that is so beyond anything we could ask for or pray for do for this woman?

I'd read this passage from Hebrews in the last session that said, "Therefore -- this is

Hebrews Chapter 12, verses one and two: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin, which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the God.

I went home and I thought, I need to study that passage a little bit more. I looked at "endured the cross." I looked back into the original Greek in some of my favorite commentaries and what the word *endured* in this particular passage means is to stay in a place longer than expected.

I wonder how many of you have been staying in a place longer than you expected. Sometimes we get so engrossed in what is not working and what's coming against us and the hassle. I honestly believe as the days go on, the trials are going to get harder. I believe that one of these days, Christ is coming and we're going home, and the enemy knows his time is limited. But Christ has won the battle. We win! So we pay little attention.

I think it's interesting when I thought about the way that even like today, before I ever come out on any kind of pulpit or platform or TV set, I always pray this simple prayer, and let me tell you why first. Do you remember the story of -- of course, you do -- the feeding of the 5,000? What's interesting about it is it is in every single one of the gospels. Now some miracles are maybe only like the raising of Lazarus from the dead, one of the most dramatic miracles, that's only in the gospel of John. Certain miracles are maybe two gospels. But the feeding of the 5,000 is in every single gospel. So I was asking the Holy Spirit, what is it about this story that is so significant for us?

Let me just read Mark's version. Mark six says this: Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to

eat."

But Jesus said, "You feed them."

"With what?" They asked. "We have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people."

"How much bread do you have?" He asked.

Mark's the only one who includes that little question that Jesus asked. Now in biblical times only the men in a crowd were counted. So if you had 5,000 men you've got like 9,000-10,000 people on the hillside that day. You've got moms and kids and grandparents. It is an arena-sized crowd. It is a huge crowd! So let me ask you, do you think the only food available on the hillside that day was that little boy's lunch? If you've got women, you've got snacks, people.

[Laughter]

There was a lot of food on the hillside that day but the only person who offered up what he had was a little boy. I think nobody else wanted to give up what they had. They were like, "It's just not going to go very far. None of us are going to get anything." Jesus took that boy's lunch, his little lunchable and he blessed it and he broke it and he fed the people.

What I think is fascinating is there were 12 baskets of leftovers. Not only did everyone in that arena-sized crowd get everything that they could possibly want to eat, 12 basketfuls! And the basket, it is not like the little baskets that we put dinner rolls in. The word used here is the kind of baskets that Roman soldiers used to keep their swords in. So 12 large baskets. One for every single one of the disciples as if to say, "Now do you get it? Now do you get it? It's never been about you having enough."

See what happens is we're asked to bring our "not enough" to Jesus. So every time before I ever walk into a platform, a pulpit, anywhere, I pause backstage by myself and I offer up my hands and I say, "Lord, under-catered one more time. I don't have enough. But I give you everything I have." And that's when God does the miracle. You have never been asked to have enough. All you're asked is bring what you have.

See that's what happened that day in Canada. It was like there is no way that I could have ministered to the depth that that brokenhearted woman needed. But when we simply say, "God, here I am," he takes that and he blesses and he doesn't just feed -- he feeds above and beyond.

I flew home to Scotland to surprise my mom and she was thrilled that I was there. She said, "This is awesome! Is there any particular reason for your trip?"

I said, "Yes! I'm here to pray with you for the rest of your life."

She said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Mom, don't you remember that you told me that when dad died you prayed two prayers?" I said, "God's answered both of them. So now we have to get before God and say now what? God's fulfilled that part of your story, of your destiny." So I said, "Okay, what have you always wanted to do?"

She said, "Well, I used to want to be a teacher but really, I think what I honestly wanted to do was to be a Bible teacher."

I said, "Great! Let's start a Bible study in your house."

She said, "I can't do that!"

I said, "Why?"

She said, "Nobody will come."

I said, "Mom, why don't I write out invitations and I'll just put them in the mailbox of everybody just in your street."

She said, "But you might offend them because they're not Christians."

I was like, "I might offend them and I might not. Maybe they will come."

And I'll never forget. It was so amazing. That first night, it was just maybe six women who came. And my mom's big fear was, "What if they ask something and I don't know the answer?"

I'm like, "Well, let's just say, 'I don't know the answer but we can find out and we'll let you know next week.'"

And it was just amazing. I sat in the background, made tea for everybody and just watched my darling mom move into this new place in her life. My mom went home to be with Jesus a couple of years ago. We, in Scotland, we don't have viewings the way -- when my husband's mom and dad died, they both lived in Charleston, South Carolina and the funeral services particularly in the south are really different. There is a lot of food involved. Casseroles for days!

[Laughter]

Pies! Pies, people! But in Scotland it is not like that. In Scotland, when someone dies then one of the family gives an outfit and then you're just placed in a simple pine box and no one sees them again.

But when my sister called me and told me that my mom had taken her last breath on earth

and her first breath in the presence of Christ, I flew home and I called the funeral director and I said, "I know we don't usually do this in Scotland but I want to see my mom."

He said, "We can do that if you come in the next couple of hours."

So I went to this little funeral parlor and the lady said, "Your mom is just behind that door."

I walked in and just in a simple pine box there was my mom dressed in the pink suit I'd sent her the Christmas before. I knew my mom wasn't there. I knew she was home with Jesus. I wanted to kneel down beside her and say, "Well done, mom! Well done! You did it. You walked faithfully. You had so many disappointments but you never gave up."

My sister asked, "Well, Sheila, what do you want to take of mom's back to America?"

The only thing I wanted was this little picture that my mom had above her bed all my life. Two words, "Yes, Lord." A friend embroidered it for her when she was just a little girl and that's how my mom lived. She got up every morning saying, "Yes, Lord." She laid her head on the pillow every night on good days and bad days, on dark days and days when the sun was shining and she said, "Yes, Lord." So that's what I brought home. I have it with me in our house and it is something I'm determined to live the rest of my life with that anthem in my spirit.

I know life can be disappointing but God is good, God is in control, and because of that we can say to Jesus, "Yes, Lord!"

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: It's a statement of faith. It's just saying, "God, we believe you." It's gone from

just head knowledge to heart knowledge. It's sunk to the deepest place in our life. The hope that Christ gives us when it meets the pain of life, gives us the strength to be able to say, "Yes, Lord."

It took me a long time to understand the beauty of those two words because if you're like me, sometimes we want to know well, what are we saying "yes" to? We don't always get to know what we're saying "yes" to. But here's the difference. You and I know *who* we are saying "yes" to. And if you don't believe that God really loves you or that God is really for you, it is hard to give an unreserved "yes." But it is my prayer for you today, honestly, it is my prayer for you right now that God would give you a fresh vision of who you are, of how much he loves you, that he delights in you. You know we hide things from one another but do you know you can't hide anything from God? He knows everything and he loves you.

If you had a good relationship with your father growing up, sometimes it is easier to have a trusting relationship with God. But if you struggled in your relationship with your father, perhaps he was an absent father or there but not really there; or perhaps, like me, you lost your father in childhood, it can be harder to say "yes" because we feel like our lives have been shaken. But I can tell you, I gave my life to Christ when I was 11, I am now 62, that's 51 years -- 51 years of the glorious faithfulness of God! Of going through disappointments and trials and heartaches. But you know, instead of them changing me to make me more -- what would the word be even? Suspicious or less trusting of God, every single trial Christ has shown up and shown himself to be so faithful. So at this place and this stage in my life, I am able to give an absolute unreserved "yes" to God because he is good and his plans are perfect. He sees you and he is for you.

I think when you realize that God sees you, it gives you a heart to want to see other people. It's like Christ washes your eyes and you suddenly see the needs of other people not just focused on yourself. One of the things that we're very committed to here at *LIFE* is to feed children who tonight are going to bed with nothing in their stomachs. But the great news is that you and I can change that today. Watch this.

On the mission field**Open Captions:**

>> As a mother, I feel like a failure because two of my children died.

Sheila: Armita is a dedicated and hard-working mother. But all the work she can find barely produces enough for one tiny meal a day.

Open Captions:

>> It starts with lack of food, malnutrition, then leads to other terrible diseases. It's really hard for me to think back to the times when they passed away.

Sheila: We were amazed that she could go on like this. But then we noticed the name across her forehead. When we asked her about it, she lit up.

Open Captions:

>> Jesus is the only hope we have. When we go to sleep, we pray, "Jesus, thank you for sustaining us for another day." It is our belief that whenever we sleep, whenever we wake, we depend on him. That is why I wear his name on my head.

Sheila: Her prayer is a prayer of faith. This is a woman of faith. I just think what an incredible opportunity! Because you and I, we get the opportunity to be the answer to her prayer. What a joy!

There are women like this all across these villages. They're trusting Jesus for everything. So why don't you and I decide we will be the answer to her prayer. We can make her life a little easier as she continues to honor Christ with every single breath she takes.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I learned so much from her. She was beautiful. So often when you go on these trips you think, we're going to go and we're going to help and we're going to make a difference. By God's grace and with your help that's true. But what I've learned is that I have a lot to learn from these mothers. To have gone through the pain and the heartache that she has gone through, and yet the very mention of the name "Jesus" her face just lit up. And that little place where she and I were sitting, that's their church. They gather there together and they pray and they thank God for His grace and for his mercy, even when they have so little.

She will stay indelibly marked on my heart and mind but the thing that I learned while I was over there is there are hundreds of mothers like that who love Jesus, who are trusting him and yet, whose hearts ache. For her to say, "I feel like a failure as a mother" -- she is not a failure. She is a faithful woman who is doing every single thing she knows to do to be able to reach out and to help her children.

I've walked with some of those moms that have literally, because there is a terrible drought in Angola at the moment, where they literally have been trying to gather up any roots, anything they could cook to put something into their child's tummies before they go to sleep.

But you and I, we have the glorious divine privilege of standing with our sister, and so many more like her, and saying, "Hey, you are not alone. The body of Christ is alive and well on this planet and we're going to intervene on your behalf. We will choose to be an answer to your faith-filled and faithful prayers."

So I want to ask of you, would do something today? This is our 30th anniversary -- 30 years of providing food for children in Africa but the need is there. As Betty once said, "We never want the line of those waiting for food to be longer than the food that we have to give."

So for \$30 you can feed three children for three whole months. That's amazing! For \$50, it can feed five children. Some of you might be able this month to give \$1,000. Do you know that that would feed 100 children? Amazing! For three months!

With any gift at all, we're going to send you this amazing book, *Death-Defying Faith*. All about the extraordinary life of the man they called "Miracle Man," Peter Pretorius. But we really need your help right now. The need is urgent. So please, call the number on your screen, go online, and give the very best gift you can possibly give.

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

Sheila: Thank you so much. Remember, for any gift at all we'll be honored to send you Peter's book. I would love to send you my own book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*. So for any gift, just ask for that book. But more than anything, thank you! Thank you for your help. But please, let's continue. When you've given in the past, let's continue to do that so that these moms who are praying to be able to feed their children will know that they are not alone.

I look forward to my next trip over there and bringing back stories of the difference it has made in the life of these moms and these children because you cared enough to partner with them. She is a faith-filled woman. Let's join our faith with hers.

So I'm Sheila Walsh for *LIFE Today*. God bless you!