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Week 49: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

James and Betty Robison

James: What a joy to welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. My wife, Betty wrote a letter to our incredible, I believe the most amazing people on the planet, the people who pray for our ministry and support it, and you told them that I was going to be 75.

Betty: I did!

James: You didn't say anything about when you might be 75.

Betty: No. I'm a little younger than you.

James: Then we'll leave it alone. But in October, she said, "You could send me a gift." If you look here on the table, and this is only a portion of them, let me just tell you, you are amazing! The gratitude you shared for what God does and how rightly focused you were.

Now understand you poured out your love and your greetings and your desire for me to have many more happy birthdays; and you pointed out that somehow we have been a blessing in your life. Betty, a lot of these, this one goes way back into the '70s. And this young lady, back when she was young heard, "Sex is not love," and learned a little bit more about the great gift of the God that is not to take the place of real love, although it is a beautiful expression.

And here is one, that says 70 is breathing down their neck but talks about how as an

unchurched person they got saved and our ministry impacted them and led them to Christ and helped them grow, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then here's one, this covers a lot of ground, heard me at Memorial Stadium in Baton Rouge in 1968; 13 years old and God had just really moved in her heart. But what happened later in the '80s, now this is 10 or 15 years later, her pastor from Laurel, Mississippi went to one of our conferences and his whole life was changed radically. It says one of the most amazing things she's ever seen.

Many, many of these incredible birthday greetings have just brightened my day and encouraged us because it was to both of us. And it was to everybody that's ever participated in reaching out and putting God's arms of love around the unnoticed and the forgotten too often. You are amazing. Thank you so much! You not only blessed me but a lot of my staff that got to read these, they said, "James, it just lifted us to a higher plain."

I want to let you know this, too. We have, not just as a guest but a team member, Sheila Walsh who is here. And she is just sitting over here on ready because we're going to spend this week, Sheila, and we're so glad you're here, we're going to give you the opportunity, and I think it is like maybe a divine assignment and that could be meaningful and that is to ask questions that a lot of our viewers have asked, a lot of people as you've traveled have asked.

But I want to ask you this. Now you've been with us about three years; right? And you've been traveling all over the world, like you've never traveled but boy, you're traveling but you're going into the places that are really overlooked. Now here's what I'd like you to just -- what do you hear as you're out speaking, from our supporters and people who come up who watch *LIFE Today*, and then tie that into the mission outreach. Tell us what you feel and what you've seen as you've not only watched what donors do but you've seen it all over the word, the effect.

Sheila: I love meeting our partners and our donors. Even in South Africa I met so many

who say, "We never miss the program." The thing I love about our donors is they say that even if the mission is different, we have different missions we represent, they say, "We trust James and Betty after all their faithful years. When they say, 'Help us,' we immediately want to help because we trust them."

I think that's an amazing thing. That weighs a lot.

James: Well, you've been over and you've seen the missionaries. Would you say they're the most amazing people?

Sheila: Yeah! Absolutely!

James: And then would you say what Peter Pretorius said many times, the greatest people are the ones who support us and enable us to be here; do you agree with that?

Sheila: Yeah.

James: You agree with that. Okay, now this question because a lot of people want to know. Is the work effective? In other words, if they're drilling water wells, is it changing everything? If they're feeding them is it working? If they're trying to rescue someone out of sexual trafficking, does it work? Do you see the miracles that they talk about?

Sheila: That's a great question and I hear that sometimes from people and that's why I love the fact that you let me do our overseas missions. I've been in malnutrition clinics where babies literally have moments left to live simply because they didn't have a meal. And then I've been to the villages where we have a feeding program, where Mission Feeding is in place, and I've seen that that first bowl -- literally, the first bowl turns from death to life. I've seen what happens when water is put in a village. I've walked with moms to muddy puddles where they've tried to get some water for their children.

But then I've been to the villages and many of them you've been there, and seen the water

well put in and the joy and the life -- that's why we call it Water for LIFE -- the life that it brings to the village. And I've sat with young girls who were in the darkest hell of trafficking and now are in our beautiful Destiny House. They've learned that they're not a number to God, they're a name and that their past does not determine their future.

We also get to see so many people give their lives to Christ. It's not just that we bring food, we bring water, we rescue but then we introduce them to the bread of life, to the water of life, and to the ultimate rescuer.

James: Just join me in just saying a prayer of thanksgiving. Father, thank you for all these wonderful supporters, many who are watching now who have a tremendous need or burden in their own life, that I pray even today it will be lightened. I pray, Lord that we're not only invited in as television hosts but Lord, that you're being invited in; that your presence will be manifest to them and you will lighten their load just as they have lightened the loads of others; in Jesus' name.

Well, Sheila, we're going to spend this week giving you an opportunity to ask questions that I hope people perhaps are interested in. I have no idea exactly what's coming but I will do my best.

Sheila: No, it was great. I feel like I've got to do a little covert behind the scenes and asked people, "If you had the privilege, as I do, of sitting beside James and Betty, what are some of the things you would love to ask them?" So I wrote down a few of those.

One person asked, what do you do when you pray and you pray and God doesn't seem to answer? Does it mean he doesn't love me as much as he loves other people?

James: Boy, I think that's a very important question to a lot of people. God answers prayer. Not all our prayers are answered in the timeframe that we wished they'd be answered in for sure. Many times it seems like "wait" is the answer. Many times we don't see any manifestation of what we hope for. And so what I've found then, when he don't

see the miracle we pray for, I'm asking God, and I know Betty and I feel this way very strongly because we prayed for our daughter that fought cancer for seven years, and on two different occasions, it appeared totally everything was great and that was what she believed all along.

So when you don't see it, you say well, when you don't get that miracle or you don't get your prayer answered, what do you do? I would say, Betty, what we have to do at that moment is we lean even more heavily on the shoulder of the Lord and in his arms. We have found that every time we are desperate or we're hurting or we're bewildered, it's as though he pulls us up closer. And we may not get the answer but we get the miracle of his presence. It is as though we know he is still God, he did not fail, he did not change, he doesn't love us less; but in the midst of that confusion or that lack of understanding, if we will just allow him to hold us close that he will begin to give us an understanding of how he would even use the difficulty or the challenge to enable us to brighten someone's day or lighten someone's load.

It is amazing that the closer I get to God and his heart, the more I begin to look through his eyes at others and the more I begin to care about others. So I find the focus is still on Jesus. I'm not indifferent about my desire but I'm suddenly realizing that there are many people who are longing for that embrace by God that may not find it as easy as I do to move in because I've moved into it throughout my life in desperate situations. I've had so many challenges that I've had to press in, but I always know he becomes the miracle in my life that I must have to deal with the failure of seeing a particular miracle that I asked for. Do you bear witness with what I share?

Betty: The way I see it, too is the foundation has been built into my life; that foundation is in God and in his word that is there. When those times come, as devastating as they are, like James said, I feel like God just drew me into his arms and he held me as long as I need him to hold me. Because there are days when you feel like you can't bear it. But God said, "I'll never give you more than you can bear." His ways are not always our ways. His ways are better than our ways.

It might not seem better at the time, just like in the loss of our daughter. Yes, I miss her, I'll always miss her. I will not get over it. But I will live through it -- and I'm living through it and God is taking me to higher ground with him in that relationship so that I can be a blessing to others that have had similar losses, that I can say, "God will hold you close. He will catch your tears. He will wipe your tears away and fill your life with joy again unspeakable." It doesn't make sense but that's our God and you can trust him.

James: So well spoken. Let me add something to that, if you will Sheila. The passage in Romans that we've quoted many times, "God works all things together for good." It doesn't say "all things are good." He says he will work all things together for good. But now, let's get the rest of it: "To those who love him and are called according to his purpose."

Here's the challenge we run into. When the unexpected, the failure to understand comes because of something that happened, that's not a time that we find it easy to start loving God. We make a commitment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We lose our life in his kingdom purpose. When you do that, when you have decided I'm going to love him with all my heart, then when those things that are not good happen for him to work it together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose, here's what I want to say to you.

Don't wait until all hell breaks loose or crisis you don't understand and circumstances that are so difficult you can't even imagine how you're going to deal with it, don't try to wait until then to think that's the time I need to start loving God. Make up your mind right where you are. Maybe everything is just going great. Maybe you have very little pressure, maybe you have no pressure right now. I'm going to love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I'm going to lose my life in his kingdom purpose. He said I will find it. Let's start there.

One of the reasons we've been able to get through is because I think we did start there.

We did make a commitment to love God with all our heart. We did decide to lose our life in his kingdom purpose. I'm not sure because when we lost our daughter, I said, "If I didn't know God so well, I wouldn't like him." But because I knew him, I knew he was going to walk through it with me. Does that make sense? To try to get that commitment level going?

Sheila: But let me ask you, you said, "Kingdom purpose." For somebody who is just tuning in and they don't even know what that means, what do you mean by that?

James: Well, we're living for his will to be done right now through us, not just in heaven when there is no challenge to his will being done. There's no opposition to his will being done in the next kingdom. But in this kingdom, the king came and he wasn't about to set it up on earth like they wanted him to; like this rod of iron, make everybody behave and line up and straight. That's not what it is. He says, I want to do something inside your heart that transforms you. And then you live with kingdom purpose so my will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In other words, let's become the fruitful manifestations of my will. I have sent another one like me, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to live in you so that you have me with you all the time. And I will guide you to truth, I'll give you wisdom, I'll give you understanding, I will give you the comfort that surpasses understanding -- peace that passes understanding. That's where I want you to live. So when you're move in kingdom purpose you move over in to allowing the king to reign in our individual lives. And we begin to share this.

Listen. I don't have to wait until I'm in heaven to experience the reality of heaven in my life now. To a large degree, we'll always have the enemy here, we'll always have a pestilence, we'll always have disease and sickness coming at us but the king is here. And he can give us peace in the midst of any storm, he can prepare a table before us in the presence of all our enemies and accusers, anoint our head with oil and knowing no matter what's going on, goodness and mercy is following us all the days of our life and throughout eternity. That's kingdom purpose. That's kingdom life.

Betty: May I say this? I think kingdom purpose, too is a daily walk. It is not something you just wake up one morning and oh, I've got kingdom purpose. Here I'm ready to go. No. It's like our journey with God. He has something to teach me every day. And if I'll receive that, that is part his kingdom's purpose. Each one of us he loves so much he gave his son for us. Do you understand that? He gave his beloved son -- his only son. And if he could do that for me and for you, he is interested in every step of our life and every breath that we take, God wants to orchestrate it.

James: Here's somebody right now with kingdom purpose. This is the lady that says, "Well, I guess you're going to take me back up to the studio today and get me to do this TV."

I said, "Betty, let me tell you something. Most people watch our program because you're sitting there. And they're just waiting for you to fulfill kingdom purpose."

She says, "Kingdom purpose is going to be a wife, a mother, a homemaker, support my husband."

I said, "Yeah, but there is a river here too." You just heard it flow, didn't you? That's kingdom purpose. Sheila, isn't that beautiful when that river flows?

Sheila: Absolutely! Here's a question from a teenage boy: "I go to church. Does that mean I get into heaven?"

James: No. Going to church will not make you a Christian any more than going to a garage will make you a car. It just isn't going to happen. You are simply going to need an experience with Christ.

Many people have missed a relationship with God because they've had a religious association, affiliation or membership. It is like joining some kind of religious lodge or religious club. That does not get us into heaven. Remember Jesus spoke to the most

religious people that have ever lived, who had memorized the Bible, who really tried to live it out. And boy, they were not living it out. They were becoming self-righteous and arrogant to where they could not reveal God or even hear God or hear Jesus speaking to them as God with them. They couldn't even hear it. So religion can keep you so far from God, going to church can keep you from God.

Jesus is a door of life. He is a way to life. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by him. He died that we might have life. So if you want to know that you've got life and you've got heaven, you receive the Jesus who died for you, who was raised from the grave, who took your sin, he took all your failures, he took your punishment, he took all of the wrath for all the wickedness that ever occurs, he took it for you to let you stand before God blameless. When God looks at you and you receive Jesus, he sees you dressed up in Jesus and you've got life eternal.

Sheila, I hope that answers that young man's question because many people -- did you ever have a church association? I was christened in a church; Betty was baptized, but didn't know the Lord. Neither one of us did. We had religion but we really didn't know Christ.

Sheila: You said something, you said, "Going to church can keep you from God." You don't mean that... once you know the Lord, you want to throw yourself into a good local church.

James: You want to be with the family of God but going to church and being religious, just like the Pharisees were, they were there all the time keeping all the rules and they did not know the Lord. So let me just say this to every one of you who are watching. If you have never received Jesus into your heart, and this is childlike faith, anyone that comes to heaven comes like a child, I don't care how big of an education or how many degrees you've got, you have a childlike faith. He says if you'll call he'll answer. If you'll ask him to forgive, he will. If you'll confess him before men as who he is, the savior, Lord of Lords, King of kings, the only way to heaven, and you receive him, ask him to come in.

Lord, be my Lord, be my king. I receive you. Just tell him that in your own words -- I receive you. I receive your death, your payment for my sin. I know I've sinned, I accept your payment. Now forgive me and cleanse me and give me new life. I commit my life to your son Jesus. I want to know you as Father. Just tell him that in your own words.

The phone number is there. You call that number and say, "I want somebody to pray with me. I want to seal the commitment." Billy Graham said it so well so often in those huge crusades, I said it for 25 years, stadiums full of people. There is something about coming forward and confessing him that seems to seal the commitment. I'm publically confessing my desire to follow Jesus. So would you make that call and say, "I just prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart."

We'll send you a book called *Knowing God as Father*. It is a simple Bible study. It gives my testimony of growing up without a father, coming to know the Father through Jesus. I hope you'll do that.

Sheila, you've been to the mission field now many times. You'll be going back. Betty and I spent nearly 25 years, did evangelism here in the crusades, more than 20 years overseas, watching all these things up close and personal and seeing the miracles, if our donors right now, the viewers, if they watch and see what's happening and they'll reach out and touch someone with love, do you believe it will change everything for so many people if they will just get involved?

Sheila: Literally, from life to death, and from a death on this earth to a life with Christ eternally.

James: Well, I'm praying that every one of you will watch this very closely because this is a very serious, sober discussion but you are the answer to the need that is being addressed. You are the perfect answer.

On the mission field

Randy: When you walk through the malnutrition clinic there are a lot of emotions. Obviously, heartbreak, the suffering that's here, the sorrow, the sadness. But it is easy to wonder, where is God in all this? These children are clinging to life, many of them. I know God sees the suffering in this place, I know he sees the affliction; he feels the heart cries of mothers who have lost children, and the little ones who are suffering.

She doesn't look like she is doing that great. Ralph, tell me what's going on here.

Ralph: Sometimes when they bring them in here, Randy, they're so weak and so lethargic they can't even eat. It is like too much labor for their body to even try to eat.

I think the formula is going to work on her if they can just get her to take some of it in. The intake will be important. I think she is going to make it. She is just looks really difficult right now.

[Four hours later.]

Randy: I don't know what's going to happen. I hope we can come back here in a year and see her running around playing. We've seen that kind of miracle before because it would be a miracle right now for this one.

It would have been better to reach this child before she got to this condition; that means more Mission Feeding, that means getting the nutritious soup mix to them before they get malnourished.

[Solanga died that evening.]

End of clip

In the studio

James: I don't ever want to hear the words, "too late." Just like Randy said, if we could have gotten the food out in the villages or the areas where they maybe gathered even as refugees coming where they heard there's some hope and there would be hope there because you put it there. If it's too late -- Betty, I was about to add, if I'd been there where Ralph was talking I would have said, "When they get so weak they can't move they intravenously begin to try to give them the nourishment. They'd even done that. You can see the little bags hanging.

What that is, that's the last attempt, the last chance for love that you share to say, "We'll give them one more chance." We didn't get food to them but now they found out there's a clinic and you make the clinic possible. You need to understand that when these missionaries say, "We're going to do our best," they mean it. You're the ones that enable them to do their best. You're the only way they're able to do it because you make everything possible. Number one, the support even for the feeding keeps the mission workers there. Many of them are volunteers who are volunteering to work because they're going to be able to take food home for their family.

We give them clothes. You see them sometimes wearing clothes that have been donated. We don't talk about it a lot because we get most of them from Asia and Europe so we don't have the shipping costs of getting over the oceans. So that's why we don't talk about that a lot but it is happening. It's all part of love.

But the food that Randy and Ralph are talking about, that's what goes out in the feeding programs where these missionaries have already located and organized, think about what I'm saying, 400,000 children that are in place. In other words, they said, "We're going to take care of you here." That means that they had enough to launch. But now for the next months to feed them, that's where you come in because it was love that people like you expressed that enabled the program to even have the hope to be established for the missionary to go and say, "We're going to do something for you" and it not be dishonest. You're the ones that make it all happen.

Would you right now dial that phone number or go online? Take your bankcard, I want you to prepare -- listen! Think bigger than automatic. In other words, if you say, "Well, James, a \$50 gift will be big for me." Well, could you do \$100? I just want you to think that way. Ask the Lord to help you do exceedingly, abundantly more because he exceedingly, abundantly wants to bless us and bless through us. So \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five or ten children for the next months. Can you do that? Could you possibly give \$1,000 to feed 100? I don't know what you can do but ask God to direct. And would you please right now write a check to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it? Or take your bankcard, go online or dial the number and make the gift God puts on your heart.

We're going to send you Peter Pretorius's incredible, *Death-Defying Faith*. This is the story, the journey of the man that impacted and changed our lives and our ministry in so many ways. He's in the presence of the Lord right now but what he established and started is going on, and I believe will grow because the love of God flowing through people just like you. We're going to send the book to say thank you. And we have some beautiful pens, "faith" and "hope" that bless you and inspire you, as well as the "Bridge of Faith," beautiful painting by Kinkade. So please, follow the leadership of God's spirit right now. Make the gift God put on your heart. Thank you so much for doing it.

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: I wish that I had -- sometimes I find myself saying or Betty does, are we making it clear what your love is doing? And how real the need is but how absolutely undeniably effective the expression of love is? I hope we are. And when I say thank you and we're going to send you this book to tell you -- you know, Sheila, you're right here by us. Is this not just an unbelievable -- like New Testament story, the book of Acts alive again?

Sheila: I stayed up late last night because I could not put it down. It is phenomenal!

James: It really is. It will inspire you. We're going to be talking about it some this week

as Sheila continues to ask us questions, and I know you'll be blessed.

Betty, thank you for the way you blessed our viewers today. Don't miss the programs this week. Sheila is going to be asking questions that I think a lot of you have wanted us to really attempt to answer well and I pray we can. Thanks so much for watching.