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Week 49: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

James and Betty Robison #2

James: I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. You see all these little cards here in front of us. They are happy birthday cards. "Happy birthday, James!" Betty wrote a letter saying I was going to be 75. That's good! I still feel very youthful. I'm not going anywhere. I've got enough of heaven living in me that I want to get everybody to have that heaven in them so you can spend eternity in heaven.

I'm holding Peter Pretorius's book, *Death-Defying Faith*. This is like adding a chapter to the book of Acts to just show you the acts of God continuing. Peter Pretorius is in the presence of the Lord right now. He lived in the presence of the Lord. Race car driver, tobacco farmer, living for himself and Jesus changed him and he began to reach out to the poor and the dying -- an amazing story! But the miracles -- the miracle healing, the miracles that took place were just phenomenal. We're giving this to all of you who will simply help us continue giving food and nourishment and love to the children Peter spent his life reaching out to, and now his family is continuing that.

Sheila Walsh is here. Sheila, exactly what is it that you're doing this week that is a little bit unusual?

Sheila: Well, I may be sitting in this seat but you've given me the opportunity this week to ask you some questions. I actually would like to pick up on that. You mentioned Peter's book. I read the book and I literally was blown away. It made me ache more for God.

I wondered a little bit about the story. How did you guys meet?

James: Well, interestingly, I was invited to do a nationwide crusade in South Africa. I went to reach out to the nation at the height of apartheid. I preached very forcefully. Many people thought I might not live to get out of South Africa. But God really did do get great things.

But what I found when I went there, I heard from a pastor who had had a failure in his life. I met with him and his wife, I believe Betty was with me, and he was in the northern part of the United States and he said, "I failed. And the church has forgiven me." He was weeping, his wife was weeping, and "They're going to restore me."

I said, "Really?"

He said, "Yes."

Well, I said, "Really?" Because I had not seen that happen very often. I had seen them and really within two weeks they literally moved him out of the house that the church, of course was giving -- it was their parsonage, so he's out. He had nowhere to go -- with his children. And he ends up in South Africa because of a missionary named Peter Pretorius said, "You come over here. We'll take care of you and your family." I thought, dear God. A missionary that sees an American pastor that failed and admitted it, and wanted to be restored and suddenly he is out and they give him a home?

And let me tell you something. That man and his wife, not only were used for me to say I want to meet that missionary who has love like that, that really loves a fallen, failed Christian, that virtually covers nearly every Christian, we need those loving arms and we need to love one another. We don't ever condone what's wrong, and we don't hide it, we see the grace of God cover it and restore people.

Well, when I met Peter I thanked him but I saw what was in his heart, the love for the

poor. He said, "Will you come back and let me show you what I do?"

And when we went back, Betty, they were having fights in the streets with AK-47s outside the window. It was very scary. But we went and had a crusade. And really, the miracle stories are in here. Blind eyes opened, totally! A cripple that had not walked, paralyzed from birth gets out of the wheelchair and walks -- with total atrophy, had no muscle strength but was walking. And the whole village, the whole town just turned inside out.

And then we went and saw what feeding was doing for these refugee children and we saw the life that love was pouring on them, it changed us forever. It is an amazing story.

Sheila: Well, there's a miracle in the book and these are miracles that we long to see but there is one in particular that I wanted you to talk about. It is called "A Miracle in Swaziland." It was about a mother's faith and persistence. Do you remember that story?

James: Fourteen straight nights the mother brought this little boy, blind from birth to be prayed for. On the last night, Peter looked out and here she came again. He knew it was the last night, coming forward, thousands of people there. Miracles were occurring. But this little boy, she wanted Peter to pray again, the last night. And so when the little boy came close, Peter just kind of touched his eyes and pushed the eyelids up and he saw, dear God. It was like blisters. There was nothing there.

And Peter thought, God, we've got to have a creative miracle. He doesn't even have any eyes! And she wants him to see. He just had his fingers there on the eyelids and praying and then he just pushed the eyelids up and there were beautiful brown eyes. I'm looking at your brown eyes right now, I have brown eyes. He had brown eyes. He could see perfectly. The first thing, he was looking at his mother and he said, "Mama, you're so beautiful!" And it was a miracle.

Here's the deal. That changed the whole country of Mozambique. It literally opened the

doors to where Peter Pretorius for the next many years, and I know because I went and stood by him, he was the only person allowed to speak in public in the whole providence of Mozambique, the whole country. No one else could! But because of that miracle and what happened, they would receive Peter. So we led literally, ultimately, millions of people to Christ.

So Betty and I walked right into that kind of situation. This book will bless you. I hope you'll get it. All we're asking you to do is just help us feed some kids and their families for the next months that just desperately need food.

Sheila: What would you say to people who say, "Why don't we see those kind of miracles here?" Because when I read the book, having had the privilege of working with Peter and meeting Peter, I believe every single word in that book. I believe that as he stepped out in faith -- and it is interesting, Ann, his wife, she does a little postscript at the end. And she said, "Since this has been published, Peter has died." And she said, "Literally, he believed God used ordinary people to do extraordinary things." But what do you say to people who say, "Why don't we see those kind of miracles here?"

James: When I try to look at it because it is a very honest question, I think one of the things that happens in areas like Africa where you talk about the power of God to heal, and you know they believed in all kinds of spirits and gods and so forth, and witch doctors, and they've been totally confused, and you talk about this Jesus, and the Jesus that we know and that we see in the Bible he becomes so real.

By the way, like when Peter Pretorius would preach and the missionaries over there preach, they've already demonstrated the love of God. They don't come in talking about the love of God without showing the love of God; that's what I hope all of you realize. When you give a thirsty person the first clean, non-contaminated, disease-ridden water they've ever had and you give them food when they've been so hungry; they are seeing an expression of love. So when you talk about love it's much easier for them to grasp it.

Though then if you talk about God loving them so much that he gave his son who died for them and he's been raised to live in them and that he can do miracles, Betty, when they hear the story it not only raises up hope but faith. And I think the reason it happens more frequently, there's just no room for doubt.

Over there, Sheila, they haven't had all these religious discussions about the "yeah, but..." The big religious deal here is yeah but... yeah but... Instead of faith. They just believe it.

We went for many months after we saw miracles where I couldn't even imagine, think about this, it wouldn't even hit my conscious mind if you said, "Would you pray for this person?" It never got to my mind that they might not get well. Something happened so deep in the greatness of God and his power that I couldn't hear all the doubt.

Now here's one thing I do know. You don't need to look for a *somebody* that the healing stream of God is going to flow freely through as though we all have to get in line to get to that somebody. The somebody is Jesus. He is in his body. Healing lines are fine but if we will be what Jesus wants us to be any one of us could pray for somebody to see the miracle. That's what Peter saw. He saw missionaries that had never prayed. We had some deacons that didn't even believe in healing, after they saw it, they prayed for people and they saw them healed. So once we begin to believe --

By the way, we lost a daughter. You asked us this in the other program, what about not? It doesn't reduce God. It doesn't make faith smaller. We don't need to start heaping guilt on ourselves and condemning ourselves or anybody else for not having enough faith. There are some things that don't happen. We have no explanation but he's still God, he's still worthy of our trust and we still go and ask for miracles. Peter prayed 13 nights and the 14th he got it. So we don't stop praying. By the way, if we don't see the miracle and the miracle is that they are now healed in the presence of God totally, no more battle, that's good but it doesn't mean we stop praying now because it didn't work the way we think it should. We just keep trusting God and praying.

Betty: Well, I think also as important is they asked about physical healing, yes, that is important, but to me, for somebody who was just a little church girl that didn't know Jesus but went along day by day looking for him but yet afraid of him, and then when Jesus comes into my heart and I know the real Jesus and I know the one that changed my life forever, spiritual healing in my life, it is priceless. And then the thing is he's worked through me, things he taken out of my life like fear, intimidation, low self-esteem, those are the healings of God. We need to notice those, too.

Sheila: That's a great point, Betty, because I think sometimes we just focus on one thing. But I think for many of our viewers, many of our lady viewers watching, it's like they don't think they measure up. What would you say to someone, what is the first step when you feel like you'll never be anything, you'll never amount to anything?

Betty: I don't know that anybody felt more ordinary than I did. The one in the middle of the family, the third child, a lot of times they say is the one that gets hidden. My sisters might say different. They might say I was spoiled. But I felt that way. I felt like why would God be interested in me? What can I do? And all the time God is saying, "Come on, girl! I've got you."

Do you know if you would read Psalms 139 every day you would know what God thinks about you because he said, "I planted you in your mother's womb before anybody even knew about you. I planned your whole life out for you." Now he gives us freedom of choice and we don't always follow his plan but he'll bring us back to it. He says, "I care about you. I created you. So no time for low self-esteem. You are beautiful to me. And you are my child and I love you."

James: Wow! You know I texted you that the other night that Betty had just read Psalm 139 with tears rolling down her cheeks. This is a lady that said, "Don't ask me to talk, don't ask me to sit there by you on television." You know what I hope you see in this beautiful person that I've been able to know as my wife for nearly 56 years now? You just see what God can do with any clay, any yielded clay to the potter's hand to be created

to a vessel of honor. There is no question.

I know what you're thinking. James, she is just a whole lot more effective than you are. I just wish you wouldn't talk so much and she can talk. Well, she is over here telling me to keep saying... she doesn't want to say something. But when she wants to she will. So trust her to God. But do you see the miracle of it? What I'm trying to say is she felt I could never do that. But she does it well, doesn't she?

Sheila: She does it beautifully!

James, one of the things I hear you talk about more than anything and when we meet as a staff you talk about your great desire that we as the body of Christ would love one another. Why is that such a passionate quest for you?

James: Because I think it was the passion of the Lord's heart. If you look at John 17, it's really the Lord's Prayer. Let me just talk to you just like it is just us talking here for a moment. The model prayer, "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," that is a model prayer. Remember in that prayer he said we are to pray, "Thy kingdom come thy will be done." The only way his will is done is when the king is present in our lives; the living manifest presence of the Lord.

Now in John 17 he shared his heart, oneness with the father. In other words, we need relationship. He wanted us to have a relationship with God like he has. Then he prayed for the word, the truth to sanctify us, not divide us, but to purify us. But his last part of the prayer, which I think the enemy has very effectively focused on, is that we would be a family, that we'd be supernaturally one with one another.

Now as a Baptist, a conservative, a fundamental Baptist evangelist, great ministry, Dr. Jerry Falwell, many of the leaders in the conservative movement said, "You are probably the strongest voice!" But what I recognized was I was oftentimes taking truth and it was almost like I was going to beat people up with it or beat them into position with God

rather than unconditionally loving them and holding up that standard. Sheila, Jesus talked about that standard making us sanctified, purified -- not mean spirited, not divisive.

So when I saw what God did in my heart because he really, really stretched me to see the whole body of Christ with all the different diverse pieces, I delivered this message to a very successful family member recently who has really been impacted by God. I said, "You know what? You have been uniquely created as a beautiful instrument with all the diversity of all the instruments God has created into a great potential symphony when harmony exists with the diversity and we come together in perfect harmony led by the Lord in the greatest symphony the world will ever hear. It was like his world exploded. I've been created to be a part of that glorious sound! And that sound is, as you and I know, because you've been all over the world, we've seen all these different pieces, all these different extremes and we've realized they can all flow together.

One of the things I've been saying and I know you've heard me say it, I launched a website called *The Stream*. There is a river flowing from the throne of God, and fed by many tributaries. In the spiritual realm, in the national realm, every realm there is a river of truth, a river of understanding, a river of life and it is fed by many tributaries of wisdom.

Now listen. In heaven it just flows from the throne of God but down here it is people appointed by God, gifted by God, and therefore in truth. If you make any one stream, you make one stream the whole stream then you miss the potential fruitfulness of receiving all that God has flowing. You may have one stream you relate to more often than others but don't leave out the importance of the others.

You and I have seen and you know right here on *LIFE Today*, we bring all the different streams in here and you've watched not only how much God loves them, how much we love them. And you've watched them flow the beauty of God from all their diverse places, the different places they might be ministering primarily, the different streams that

they might have come out of in their tradition but now they're flowing. And is it not a beautiful sight to see?

Sheila: One of the things that is really unique about your heart, James and it is the same with Betty, is that you totally get behind what other people are doing. Even if they can't do anything for *LIFE* at all, it doesn't matter. You get behind them and you support them because you see Christ in them.

James: Because it is God's purpose through them. It is their divine unique assignment and it is what they're supposed to do. One of the things that I pray that all of our viewers can see and you have seen the effectiveness, you see what *LIFE Today* does by going into the homes of all the different people from all the different streams of the Christian faith and we reach out to them and then you see all these leaders come from all these different streams and you see us encouraging them but you see our viewers blessed by them and you rejoice in it. It is the people who are watching us that make it all happen. We couldn't even have *LIFE Today* if it were not for people who were praying for us and supporting us. We could not feed the hungry. We couldn't drill water wells. We couldn't give shoes to little children and smiles where they need surgery. We couldn't do any of that without the people that are watching us right now. They are important.

Do you think they get it? Do you think our viewers realize how important they are?

Sheila: Well, I pray so. It's one of the reasons I really want them to get a hold of this book because I read this last night and I understood the Genesis of Mission Feeding. This is where it all began.

James: It really did. Listen. It is a miracle journey, *Death-Defying Faith*. Peter Pretorius was used by God to not only change the lives of millions of people that our viewers have reached out and literally saved their lives, and led them to Christ because of the witness of missionaries, but what Peter Pretorius did was he impacted our entire ministry and ministries all over the world to realize we don't overlook the least of these. We do not

overlook the poor.

I want to tell you something. Once you begin to touch the people, "the least of these," it is as though all of heaven begins to move in ways to bless us. You say, "James, you all have known sadness and sorrow. How can you say God's blessing you?" Because he is filling us with the joy of his presence and his peace that only he can give and his insight and his direction and he'll do the same for you.

I want you to look in with us on something that impacted our son. This son is a miracle. You know we had a miracle girl after we adopted Randy. But Randy was a miracle because Betty, with the travail of prayer, you were told you couldn't have another baby after we had Rhonda. And you prayed and God said, "Adopt a little boy." An amazing little boy came into our life. Now that boy, a father of four and I'm telling you, a miracle occurred and watch what happens when he is walking in Africa. And just listen to the heart of God through our son Randy.

On the mission field

Announcer: For 30 years, viewers of *LIFE Today* have been helping save millions of lives from malnutrition and starvation. Though you may never meet them in this life, people like Jose, Jacob, and Matthew are grateful that you chose to make Mission Feeding possible through your giving.

But while there is cause for celebration there are children we've still been unable to reach. Their tragedies caution us against growing complacent.

Randy: Angelica was only five years old when they buried her here. They put a marker in the sand with her name and the dates. If you look at the inscription here you can see that it won't last that long. It will fade. Malnutrition is robbing children of their future. These children must not be forgotten. I can promise you, God knows them by name.

Will you think about those that we can still save? There are so many that are right on that edge of life and death, and we make the difference. Let's not forget them. I'm asking you to do something right now. Support the Mission Feeding outreach because that's how we stop this cycle of death because you really can make a difference. You can give these children hope and a future instead of an unmarked grave.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Randy, I want to say, mom and I both, thank you for being a tremendous blessing as our son and a wonderful husband and father of four incredible children. Thank you for going to the mission field many times and going all over the world with me when oftentimes all you did was carry a camera and try to capture what God was doing. Thank you, son. Thank you for letting us see those children.

You know when I was looking there at Randy touching that little child's hand I can remember so many times over the years little fingers that would clutch my finger. I remember when our children did when they were babies and our grandchildren, 11 of them and now four great grandchildren. They just clutch your finger. Those little children are reaching out. Sometimes they can barely move and it just broke my heart to look at that child a while ago where the skin was like flaking off because of malnutrition. I see that and I know God wants to cover. You know what God covers them with? He covers them with love and compassion because that's the only way that their skin can be restored to health and their lives saved.

The missionaries are in place. They planted their lives in the midst of that pain and suffering to try to restore them. But the missionaries are totally helpless without our support. They can weep and cry and pray but they can't feed children unless we provide the food. They can never drill water wells unless we make it possible.

What we're asking you to do right now in Mission Feeding is to go online or dial that number and it becomes a life line -- always a prayer line -- but now it is a life line. We're asking you to call the number and know that you're reaching out and you're putting loving arms around those children as you put something in those bowls.

So here's what we ask you to do. Dial the number, go online, take a bankcard; if you write a check to *LIFE*, make it to *LIFE*, but call us and tell us you're mailing it. We need to know. But right now let us know what God is leading you to do. \$30, \$50, or \$100, we can feed three, five or ten children for the next months. \$1,000 we can feed 100.

We're sending Peter Pretorius's book, *Death-Defying Faith*. It's going to have a tremendous positive impact on your life. So please right now would you dial the number? Would you just make the gift God put on your heart? If you're mailing it, call us and let us know. We have some other gifts to give to you to bless you because we want to be a blessing to you. That's why we come in your home every day. But just know this, you're going to be an eternal blessing to the people you reach out and touch right now with God's love because we're going to tell them that that love came from our Father in heaven and was expressed through his son, Jesus. And we're going to love in not word only but we're going to be loving in deed. Thank you for doing it. Thank you so much for your gift.

Begin video clip

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

Through *LIFE*'s Mission Feeding outreach you can save lives by feeding and caring for children currently suffering in parts of Angola, Mozambique, and South Sudan. With previous reserves gone and Mission Feeding helping in areas with severe crop failure, we

urgently need your support to replenish food supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us.

Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. With your gift of any amount we'll send you *Death-Defying Faith*, the extraordinary life of miracle man, Peter Pretorius. This autobiography, completed just days before his unexpected death, chronicles the thrill-seeking adventures of missionary, Peter Pretorius. You will love reading how God took this ordinary man and performed extraordinary miracles throughout all of Africa.

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

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

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, in behalf of the missionaries and their children and their families, thank you. I can promise you, this will be a blessing to you. Ann Pretorius, Isak, their son, and Jackie, a daughter, they're just all basically full time in carrying on the ministry and seeing it grow. Sheila, I think the ministry may even expand right now because of what we're watching in the family. What do you think?

Sheila: As God took Peter home, I think something else was deposited into those who are behind. I think we're going to see amazing things! But get hold of this book. It will blow you away.

James: I know you mean that and that really is the truth. It is *Death-Defying Faith*. You're going to say, "Dear God!" And here's the deal. What you read, you find hard to believe, we saw it. We not only saw it in Africa, we saw it here and we still do. Get the book. Okay? You do that by simply giving someone a chance to live. Thank you so much for watching. Thank you for your help. God bless you!