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Week 45: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

"Let Go of What You Can't Control"

Sheila: My name is Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I was thinking about something today and I wondered how it hits you where you're at right now in your life. Do you ever feel as if life is kind of out of control? It could be something as simple as your budget and your family. You've set yourself a budget and you get to the end of the month and somehow it is just kind of out of control. Or maybe it is with your kids. Maybe they're just not doing their homework when they're supposed to, and not going to bed when they're supposed to and you get to the end of the day and you're just exhausted.

But sometimes, it is a lot more than that. What do you do when you're really praying about something and you're asking God to move in a particular situation and it just feels as if life is completely out of control? You don't know whether God is just not listening to you or maybe that God is angry with you or maybe that God is disappointed in you. It's hard when you feel as if there is a situation going on and there's very little that you can do about it.

I've learned so much in the last few years about control. I think probably, it really started in some ways when Barry and I had our son. There's nothing that makes you feel more out of control than when you have a child; they're so tiny at first and so helpless, and then as they begin to grow and make their own decisions and choices. And you want to protect them.

But I find myself before we came on the air today just praying for you. I know that I don't know where you are, whether you're watching on television somewhere, whether you're

watching in Australia or South Africa or here in the states, whether you're just catching up maybe, late at night on your computer and you're streaming this but I just wanted you to know if you feel as if life is out of control, if you feel as if God is not listening, I want to remind you that I read a wonderful saying from Corrie ten Boom, you'll remember who she was, a beautiful Dutch lady that had to spend some time in the Nazi prison camps. But she said, "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God -- don't be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

So that's what I want us to look at today. What do you do when you feel as if things are just not falling into place? When it feels as if things are very out of control.

Well, some time ago we had some friends come into the studio and hang with us for a couple of days and I had an opportunity to share with them. My message to them was how do you let go when you feel as if life is out of control? How do you relinquish that desire that we all have to kind of keep our hands on everything and simply say, "You know what, God? I believe you're good. I believe you're sovereign. So when I cannot control something, when it is out of my control I'm not going to panic because I believe that no matter how things seem to be, I believe that you are in control."

Would you watch this?

Begin video clip

Sheila: How do we, in Jesus, let go of what we can't control? One of my favorite quotes from Charles Spurgeon is this, and this is profound. You don't say something like this easily: "I have learned to kiss the waves that throw me up against the rock of ages."

I've spent a lot of time studying his life and he struggled with severe depression all of his life. He wrote at one point, "If what I am feeling right now was shared amongst everyone I don't think they could bear it." Times when he felt the darkness was so heavy that he couldn't break through and yet he wrote, "But I've learned to kiss the waves that throw

me up against the rock of ages."

I don't think I had any idea of how out of control we can feel at times until I became a mom. I had no idea that children came out with their own opinions.

[Laughter]

And their own little timetables. I tried to read all those books you're supposed to read before your children are born and what they are supposed to do at certain times and Christian had no interest in any of that. He didn't walk until he was 14 months old. And some of my friends were saying, "There's something wrong. You need to take him to a doctor."

I said, "I don't think so. He can crawl at the speed of a B.M.W. I think he is quite happy."

[Laughter]

Then one day, and actually it was on a platform, it was so funny. It was at *Women of Faith* I think here in Dallas, in an arena; 18,000 women! And Barry used to kind of carry Christian up on the platform and I would hold him and he would wave to the camera. Well, this time Barry actually put him down on the stage and Christian crawled and he was almost at me and then he just kind of looked. And he looked around and he just stood up and walked toward me. I thought, that's amazing but I hope he doesn't need an audience for everything.

[Laughter]

Otherwise we could be in trouble here.

[Laughter]

But there are so many things that -- because I was older when I had Christian, I was 40 when I got pregnant. And I was so tired. He was one of those babies that cried for a lot. He cried for the first few months. We tried everything. We sat his little chair on top of the drier. We ran taps. We ran the vacuum cleaner until there was no pile left on the carpet. We did everything that friends said, "This worked for my child."

One night Barry said, "Listen. You're so tired, Sheila. So tonight I want you to sleep all through the night and I'll get up and I'll feed Christian."

I was like oh! Thank you so much. So I heard Christian cry and I heard Barry get up and I thought, oh this is awesome. And I lay there for a couple of minutes and I thought, I think I'll just check on them. So I went through and there are Barry and Christian. Barry is sitting on the sofa and Christian is on his lap. They're both fast asleep and the bottle is in Christian's ear.

[Laughter]

I'm thinking, no, I don't think that's going to work.

But control, it's not necessarily a negative or a positive thing. It really depends on what it is attached to. If you're walking a busy street and you've got your child with you, then you need to know that you're in control. If you struggle with any kind of addiction whether it is food or alcohol or some of you have written to me recently told me that you're struggling with drugs. One of you wrote to me and said, "Do you think God can still love me?" Yes! Absolutely! Romans 8:38-39 tells us, "There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." He came to us in our brokenness so that we could be healed.

In fact it says in Proverbs 25:28, encouraging us to be responsible and to have control; it says, "A person without self-control is like a city with broken down walls."

In Galatians 5:22 and 23, Paul writes this: "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

But there's lots of situations in life where the word *control* has more negative connotations. Have you ever heard the word, "She is a *control freak*"? Maybe you've worked with someone and you feel like they're very controlling. That is not a good thing. Some people, when life feels out of control, sometimes we turn to things to try and get some control back.

If something negative has happened in childhood... I discovered when working with a friend of mine who is a psychologist that so many eating disorders have their root in people feeling out of control. I remember I was on a flight, I was flying to Hong Kong and a lady came on the flight and she was quite large. The gentleman beside me just whispered to me, I was the only one supposed to hear, but a very unkind comment about her. I turned to him and looked at him. I said, "Sir, we know nothing about her life. We don't know what might have gone on. Maybe she is trying to build a wall around herself to protect herself."

Sometimes it goes the other way. I have a friend whose daughter is struggling with anorexia at the moment and part of that is that her life has felt very out of control since she was a child and it's almost like this is the one area where she gets to say no.

For me, it was a little darker than that. I had no control as a child over my dad's anger and over his suicide. I remember as a child thinking, how is it possible to have a loving father who suddenly seems to hate you? So I spent the next 30 years of my life trying to control the love of God. When I gave my life to Christ I remember my mom saying to me, "Sheila, not only is Christ your savior and you get to make him your Lord, you have a heavenly Father watching over you."

That would be good news to most of us unless you've had a challenging relationship with

your earthly father. So for me, I remember thinking that night, even though I was only 11 years old, well, I'm going to be the perfect Christian because if your earthly dad could stop loving you, maybe your heavenly Father could too.

At some point, God in his mercy let's our life fall apart. Sometimes we forget that Jesus said, "I've come to give you life" -- not survival, not just getting through one more day. "I have come to give you life." And some days God's greatest mercy is letting our lives fall apart.

For me, that was when I was 34 and I ended up in a psych ward and hitting the floor was one of the greatest things God ever did. Even though I was terrified, even though I felt, could God still love me? It was an interesting thing; if you've ever anyone in your family who has struggle with any kind of mental illness or ever had to be hospitalized like that. For the first 72 hours no one can visit you and you can't leave. It's called a 72-hour hold. I was there for a month. But there you go -- 72-hour hold. But you know what I discovered? They might not have let anyone in my family or my friends check in to see me that first night but I want you to know the Lamb of God came with me. And I discovered... We're so used to worshipping God's majesty as we should. He is almighty, he is majestic, he is God all by himself but I discovered the truth of Psalm 34, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Like Elijah, I remember that very first night in the hospital praying a prayer that God did not answer. Have you ever been grateful that God *didn't* answer a prayer that you prayed? Yeah. I remember that first night saying, "God, if you have one ounce of mercy in your heart left for me, please take me home because I can't do that."

But like Elijah, in that cleft of the rock, I heard that gentle whisper, "I'm with you. I always have been. I always will be. You can rest for a while. You can let go."

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: It might sound easy for me to say. Maybe you're thinking, well, you know what? You really don't know my situation. You don't know what I'm walking through. And that's true. But I do know this. I know that God is good. I know that God loves you.

One of my favorite Psalms, when I'm not sure what to do, when things feel out of control, I love to turn to Psalm 91. It's probably a favorite of yours too. But I'm just going to read the first four verses and I'm reading from the New Living Translation: Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the almighty. This I declare about the Lord, he alone is my refuge. My place of safety; he is my God and I trust in him. For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

Such a beautiful picture of who our Father is. I remember a story my mom told me of a fire that happened on a farm near where we lived in Scotland. My mom was a farm accountant and so when she heard of the fire she had to get involved. She said that there were several of them walking through the grounds and everything was pretty well gone. The farm house had burned down. The sheds had burned down. And she saw there was a chicken laying on the ground, just badly scorched. The chicken had obviously lost its life, a mother hen. And the farmer just casually moved the mother hen with his boot and realized that underneath were six little chickens still alive. Literally -- the mother had literally put her body over her little ones to protect them from the fire.

That's who our God is. You know when you and I deserve judgment, when you and I deserve to be punished, when you and I could have been dismissed by God because we don't have enough faith, his very son laid his life over us so that we would be saved.

And perhaps even as you're listening to the program today you think, well, you know what? I'm not really sure I know this Jesus, not the way you talk about him. Maybe you

think, I go to church every now and again but wouldn't it be sad to know the building and not know the builder?

Because when we sit here and we talk to you about Christ, we're not talking about religion. The last thing we need right now in America is just one more debate on religion. Jesus is not interested in religion. He is interested in relationship. That's what God wants for each one of us. And when you're in relationship with him then it is easier to trust him and to understand that he is in control.

When I wrote my book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay* that came from a real understanding in my own life that I'll never get it all right. I'll never be everything I wish I could be. But I don't have to pursue perfection. Instead I get to pursue Christ who is perfect. I don't know where you're watching this program but maybe you're thinking well, I don't know about this Jesus. Do you know all you have to do is -- the Bible says those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved?

If you're tempted to think well, it might be too late for me, it is not. If you have a pulse, if there is not a white chalk mark around your body, it is not too late. You just have to simply say, "Jesus, I know I'm a sinner and I want to be saved. I believe you are the son of God. I believe that you died and I believe you rose again. So I want to give you control of my life. I want to throw myself all in. I want to be all in until it is all over." When you pray that kind of prayer you'll discover that you don't have to fear the future because you know who your father is and that he is with you in the future.

One of the great joys that we get here at *LIFE Today* is being able to reach out to those who wonder if they have a future and make a difference. Watch this.

On the mission field

Open captions: Juliette used to help in the garden and with family chores, fetching

water, washing dishes or in the kitchen. But now she's gone.

Announcer: In the unforgiving terrain of Angola, Africa with its scarce water for crops, an overwhelming number of mothers struggle to save their children from starvation and illness. Too many lose that fight. Catalina is one of those mothers.

Open captions:

>> We had a short rainy season followed by a drought. That's why we are harvesting so few crops. Sometimes we have to go to our friends and beg for food.

Announcer: Usually it's barely enough and sometimes they go without. In the daily desperate fight to feed her children and keep them healthy, Catalina is given no respite and no reward.

Open captions:

>> Last month my daughter, Juliette, was admitted to the hospital. She was complaining of a sore mouth and severe stomach pains. The hospital found no nutrients in her blood. So they took her to intensive care and treated her for a couple of days. But then she started feeling feverish again, and not long after that, Juliette died.

Announcer: Juliette was the second child Catalina has lost. The heartache is familiar and overwhelming, intensifying her fear for her remaining children.

Open captions:

>> I'm afraid for my other children. I just don't want to see this happen again.

Announcer: There wasn't anything we could do for the two children Catalina already lost but her remaining children and the multitude of other mothers, with your response we can help ensure their story is different.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I've walked by that very graveyard in Angola looking at all these tiny graves and the way the parents try to honor their children, leaving just a little something that was a token of their life, whether it is just a little toy; some had left even just like a water bottle. Something as if to say, "My child was alive."

This is heartbreaking -- absolutely heartbreaking. In fact, when we were there we had to step aside out of respect as another truck arrive with another family ready to bury another little one. The amazing thing is we can change this.

Mission Feeding has been huge to *LIFE Today*. In fact, I don't know if you realize this, this is our 30th anniversary of feeding children in Africa. One of the people that really have -- our heroes, Peter Pretorius -- an amazing man! He was with me on my last trip to Angola and I sat with Peter. He has a new book out called, *Death Defying Faith* which I'm going to tell you in a couple of minutes how you can get a hold of that. But I watched this man who has walked those roads year after year feeding children. I watched him weep with a mother. I watched him pray over children. And now Peter is safely home with Jesus but he's left us with a mission to do. And if you and I determine that we're not going to let that beautiful mother lose one more child here's what we could do. \$30 feeds three children, not for a week -- for three months! Can you imagine that? \$30, three children for three months. \$50 will feed five children. \$100 feeds ten. And if some of you are able to give \$1,000 that would feed 100 children -- that's like a whole village for three months.

Sometimes we spend money and don't pay much attention but I saw so many of those mothers and they're faith-filled mothers. So many of them get down on their knees at night and ask God, "Please help me feed my children." And you and I have the awesome privilege of being the answer to their prayer.

Would you join with us today? In Peter's memory would you say, "I'm going to stop this." You can go and just dial the number on your screen, go online -- just give the best gift you possibly can so that the next time I'm in Angola, I can bring back stories of the children's lives who are changed. Mission Feeding, from the first bowl of food that a child gets, it literally begins to reverse the cycle from death to life.

We can do this. Some of you can give a lot and that's wonderful but don't think, well, I only have \$30. \$30 -- three children -- three months! Let's do this together. Please dial that number on your screen, go online, and make the very best gift possible.

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

Randy: This is a grave. It is an empty grave. It has no real significance until you put someone in it. Unfortunately, they're putting far too many children into these graves.

Malnutrition is robbing children of their future and robbing families of their joy. They've already dug these graves because they're expecting death. But I have a prayer. I'm expecting life.

So I ask all of you, will you fill a bowl so they don't fill a grave? I hope everyone watching will do the best that they can. Give the best you can because they don't have to be waiting on children to die. We can make that difference. If you'll just go to the phone right now, go online, give the best gift you can and know that when you fill that bowl you give a child hope and life.

Sheila: Thank you so much. If the lines are busy, please keep calling. This is Peter's amazing book, *Death Defying Faith*. For any gift at all we will be honored to send that to you. Also, I would love to send you my book, it is called, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*; moving forward one day at a time.

Don't you think it is amazing that you and I get to do this? It is not something God is forcing us to do? We have the unique privilege of being on the earth at this time to make a difference in Jesus' name.

And always remember too, we're here if you need us. You can call. We have an amazing prayer team who would love to pray for you. So thanks so much for being with us. I'm Sheila Walsh and I'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*.