

1/23/19

Week four: WFL

Sheila Walsh

Scars of Victory #2

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I just wanted to say thank you to those of you who write letters or email me here or leave little notes on Facebook and just share the difference that this ministry is making in your life.

I had the privilege today of spending 40 minutes on the phone with a dear partner who has really worked with us. Her thing is that she wants to see clean water put into villages where there is no clean water. But to hear a little of her story and even though she has gone through hard times in her life, she still wants to make a difference.

I think that's one of the beautiful things about when you understand the love of God, when you understand how far he has brought you then it's the most natural thing in the world to want to be able to reach out to others. But unless you really get it at a core level that everything about you is seen and known it is hard to do that.

I was in a church in Canada not very long ago and I spoke about the fact that God tells his story in the scars of Jesus. I talked about the fact that because of the love of God in Christ that we don't have to hide anymore. We don't have to pretend we're doing okay. We really can say it is okay not to be okay.

At the end of the event there was a young girl, she told me she was 16 and she said, "I want to show you something." I said, "Yeah, of course." What she did was she pulled up the sleeves of her sweatshirt.

She said, "I've been a cutter for some time now and I'm getting some help but I'm left with the marks." She said, "I never go out in public with short sleeves because I'm ashamed of my scars. But when you prayed today at the end of the meeting," she said, "I went forward and I offered up my scars to Jesus." She said, "I'm not ashamed anymore."

That's the freedom that God wants for single one of us. Would you watch this?

Begin video clip

Sheila: Not all scars are visible. Some are invisible. Some scars are inside you and nobody sees them but you know they're there. I was thinking of King David. He knew what unconfessed sin does to the soul and the spirit. His hidden scars haunted him day and night. Do you remember his story? He slept with another man's wife and then he sent that man into the front line of battle knowing he would be killed. So he has adultery, he has murder on his conscience, internal scars that tormented him.

But do you remember when the prophet Nathan confronted him with his sin? He immediately repented. Here's what he said in Psalm 51. And this is for you -- for any of you who right now think I've gone too far, I've done too much. There is no place where the love of Christ cannot meet you; there is no pit too deep, there is no night too black, there is no place that the love of God cannot reach you. And when it does, this is what David wrote: Purify me from my sins and I will be clean. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again. You've broken me -- now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you.

A beautiful, beautiful prayer.

I've told you this before but the book of Romans is one of my favorite books that I've

ever read and I love in particular Romans chapter eight is amazing. If you think about it, it begins with no condemnation and it ends with no separation. It doesn't get any better than that. It says: There is now therefore no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.

But this is how it ends. This is Romans 8:38 and 39: And I am convinced.

And the word that he uses there in the Greek is the word that you would use if you were taking evidence to the Supreme Court. It is irrefutable.

I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow. Not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below -- indeed nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I love that he adds that. Because sometimes you think, well, you don't know what I did. That's why he adds "indeed nothing." In case you're thinking of something that you did that I didn't cover -- nothing. Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate you from the love of God that's revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He welcomes you to bring your scars to him, your external ones, and your internal ones. Allow the love of God to rest on your scars. Ask him to help you see them not as scars but as glorious tattoos of victory.

One of the things that I think I'm becoming more like as I get a little older is I so want just to be exactly who God created me to be. In fact, we were leaving the house today and my husband said, "You've got a bit of hair sticking out at the side."

I said, "Yeah, I know." And here we went. I think there are certain times in life you just think, let's just live life.

I saw that in an unprecedented way last Christmas. We decided, Barry and I decided that we would take Christian and his girlfriend at the time to New York at Christmastime. I'd never been to New York at Christmas and I knew it was going to be amazing. We did everything! We only had four days but we packed everything in. We went ice skating in Rockefeller Center. And we watched a young man get down on one knee and ask a girl to marry him. It was lovely! And she said yes, which was good. We saw the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, we ate roasted chestnuts on the street. Then we took a rickshaw, a cycle rickshaw ride around the city while Christian and his girlfriend, they took a horse and carriage. It was just lovely.

And one of my favorite things was the quiet beauty of Saint Patrick's Cathedral. It is right there on Fifth Avenue. Crowds outside but you slip inside and it is so quiet. And to just sit there for a little while in the quietness and remember the real gift of Christmas.

But then Barry did something which was completely out of character. Have you ever seen the movie *Elf*? It is one of my favorite Christmas movies. I love the movie *Elf*. So we're walking down Fifth Avenue and it is packed with people. And we're waiting to cross to the other side and suddenly, Barry went all *Elf* on us. He hopped across on the crosswalk to the other side of the street. I'm like, "What are you doing?" And the interesting thing was nobody paid any attention.

[Laughter]

It's New York. I remember saying to him, "What are you doing?"

He said, "You know what? If I can't go all *Elf* at this stage in my life, when can I?"

I thought it was just... there is something about celebrating that life's not perfect, it never will be and yet to show up and enjoy the moments.

I had the privilege recently here at LIFE of interviewing Scott Hamilton, one of

America's just beloved Olympic skaters, and such a godly man. He is an amazing guy. He and his wife are darling. I said, "When you were young, was it hard to learn to skate?"

He said this, "I fell down over 30,000 times but I got back up over 30,000 times." So often we allow labels or other people's expectations of us to hold us back.

I was at a conference a few months ago and I was looking out at the audience and it was all female, apart from one man. I thought it was kind of interesting to see just this lone man. I wondered if his wife had tricked him and told him it was a man's conference.

[Laughter]

There he was just sitting. I felt, well, that's interesting. At the end I was signing books and talking to people and I saw that he was standing off to one side with his face kind of turned away from me with a young girl that I learned was his daughter. But once everyone else had gone he came up to me and turned his face fully toward me and that's when I saw the terrible scars.

He said to me when he was 15 years old he put a loaded gun under his chin and pulled the trigger. He said, "In that millisecond between me doing that and the bullet discharging, I heard the voice of God saying, 'Do you want to live?' And I said, 'Yes.'"

He is now married with four children. The bullet is still in his head. It is in a place where they can't remove it. It's damaged his vocal chords so he speaks with a very croaky voice.

I said to him, "When you look in the mirror, are those scars, are they a harsh reminder of that day?"

He said, "No, no. They are a glorious reminder of the grace and the mercy of God."

He's actually starting a ministry for children, for teenagers called You're Worth Fighting

For.

When I started writing my book *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*: Moving forward one step at a time, I began with that very simple thought. But I wanted to finish differently. I didn't want to start with it's okay, here's who we are. I wanted to end the book by encouraging you to fight for more. Every person I encounter in scripture who is willing to wrestle with their faith became to know more of God.

Think of Job -- all his struggles, all his scars, all his tragedy but at the end this is what he said Job 42:5 says this -- and remember, the very first words of Job it was like he was the most righteous man on the planet at that time. So he was a man who honored God, who loved God, who covered his children in prayer but after he has gone through hell on earth he says this, "I'd only heard about you before but now I have seen you with my own eyes."

So the love of Christ propels us to take the next step and the next and the next. And it is never about us being better behaved, it is about us being more in love -- more in love with Jesus. See you, you're worth fighting for, your faith is worth fighting for, Christ is worth fighting for.

I would love to pray for you all. For those of you watching, God sees you. You're not alone. I don't care where you are right now, you might be in a hotel room, maybe you're picking up a bottle and you know you shouldn't, maybe you're in a place where you know you shouldn't be, maybe you think there is no way -- there no way that God can love me.

What if I asked you this? What if I said, "The TV channel is going to change in a minute and what you're going to see is a movie of your own life -- everything -- everything you've ever said, everything you've ever done, all those secrets that you have hidden, all the things you thought, well, that's not really sin. I just thought about it, I never did it. An unedited movie of your life, up on the screen, for anyone to watch. How would you feel?

The truth of the gospel is God has seen your movie and he loves you. God has seen your movie and he loves you. It's time to come home. So if you're watching and you do not know Jesus, I want to ask if you would pray a simply prayer with me. There's nothing special about my words, God will hear your heart. But wherever you are, just pray this prayer: Father God, thank you for loving me. Jesus Christ, thank you for dying for me. I know I'm a sinner and I ask you to forgive me. I believe you're the son of God. I believe you died and you rose again, and I give you my life; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture tells us whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And if you prayed that for the very first time, two things, would you let us know? We'd love to celebrate with you. Second thing, if you prayed that prayer, there is a party going on in heaven and your name is on every one of the balloons. Amen! Bless you all.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: That's the truth. That's the beautiful truth. Scripture tells us, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner repenting. I find myself wondering, sometimes you might flick through channels and you watch a program like this or maybe you've just got into the habit of thinking, yeah, I love to watch James and Betty or I love to watch Sheila and you watch the program. But it made me wonder, do you really understand that God is not interested in religion? Religion causes chaos around the world. What Jesus is interested in is relationship. He wants to know you.

There is nothing in life, nothing that gives me more joy than watching one single person finally understand that they are loved by God. It is the most beautiful thing in the world because immediately, when you prayed that prayer, your name is written in the lamb's book of life and your eternal destiny is safe with Jesus Christ. It's a gift. That's the thing that's outrageous. It's an absolute gift.

But if you are like me and like our staff here at *LIFE*, we know this gift of grace, we did not deserve. It is just God's unconditional love that we don't deserve. It is a free gift. When you allow that grace to just soak you to the skin, then you want to be able to bring his life and his light and his help and his hope to as many people as you can.

You know that we're very committed to bringing clean water to areas in the world where moms and their children have to walk sometimes two or three miles to the only water sources available; and it is filthy and disease-ridden, and it is the only choice they have.

Well, recently, my darling friend, Tammy Trent took a trip to Burundi. She is going to show us what she saw there. Watch this.

On the mission field

Tammy: Sheila, I've known you for years and I absolutely love you. I think that the thing I love the most is your heart for people, and especially for broken people. I know that together we can relate to so many places we've been with *Life Outreach*. We've heard some pretty heartbreaking stories and here's another on today. I want you to hear about it.

Translator:

>> It started when my child, he became sick because we used this dirty water. So I took him to a hospital. But because it was very far away from here my child lost a lot of blood. All they could say at the hospital was that he had a lack of blood. In the end he died. His name was Ellis.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: His name was Ellis, three years old. Not just a random child in a random country. A child made in the image of God who lost his life simply because his mom, who loved him so much, couldn't provide clean water.

I've tried to put myself in their shoes and I can't. I've never had that kind of situation where my son desperately needed something and I couldn't give it to him. But when I see a situation like that, I think of when Jesus said, "I was in prison and you visited me. I was hungry and you gave me a meal. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink of water."

I don't think -- I don't believe we've really unpacked that scripture and taken it as literally as Christ meant it. But he sees every single one of these children. He was with Ellis in those last few moments as his desperate mother tried to get him to a hospital in time. Not just a random child in Africa, a beloved child. As Tammy said, and she's got such a beautiful heart of wanting to make a difference -- and I know that you do too.

Here's the thing. If I just had to watch stories like that, it would be heartbreaking but the great news is we are really ramping up here at *LIFE Outreach International*. We're determined to be a force on this earth as the body of Christ moving forward in Jesus' name and absolutely bringing hope and bringing healing. So our commitment at this first part of 2019 is this, we want to see 200 new wells put in to 15 different nations. That might sound like a lot but actually it is very doable.

If you're able to give \$48 that will provide clean water for ten people for a lifetime. That's how long those wells last! If you're able to give \$144, 30 people clean water for a lifetime. I don't want to see one more mother heartbroken because she couldn't get her child help in time. Not because the child had some disease like cancer or something like that -- simply because the child had to drink unclean water. So let's change that.

Would you go to your phone? Would you make the best gift possible? Go online. If you're going to write us a check, just call us and say, "It's on the way." God's army is on the move. Please go to your phone. Give the best gift you can, in Jesus' name.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today, a mother living in extreme poverty will do the unthinkable -- give her children dirty, diseased-filled water that she knows could kill them. With no other choice what's a mother to do?

With your help, clean water is on the way. Mission Water for LIFE provides a way for parents to save the lives of their children, to offer them a bright future free from the fear of death. With your gift today, you can help drill and establish the first 200 water wells of the year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children, a gift of \$48 will help provide for 10, \$72 will provide for 15, and \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift, we'll send you the *Praying Grace* 55-day devotional. This new devotional will help you renew your mind to the realities of God's grace and help you pray powerful grace-based prayers for each day.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "Praying Grace" tumbler. This reusable 16-ounce container is constructed with insulated stainless steel, perfect for hot or cold beverages.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and you may request the beautiful, new commemorative bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip**On the mission field**

Tammy: This is one of those very exciting days for me when I get to be in the presence of –

[Laughter]

-- happy children and fresh clean water! It wasn't that long ago when we came into this village and they had no clean water at all. Nothing! Children were dying. We talked to some moms that had lost husbands, lost children. I mean it was really, really heartbreaking.

What an exciting day for me to travel back here today and to see the fruit of what we have given together. When you partner with *LIFE Outreach*, it is wells like this that make it possible to give them fresh clean water. Will you please consider partnering with us today? Go online or call the number at the bottom of your screen and give the best gift that you can give.

I know that together we can make a difference -- not just in this village but hundreds of villages all around the world. Let's make a difference and let's change it today!

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! I really believe we can do this. And once those 200 are in, we're going to go for 200 more. But for any gift at all, we will send you this awesome 55-day devotional, *Praying Grace*. If you want my book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*, we'll send that too.

So from all of us here at *LIFE Today*, I just want to say thank you so much and God bless you.