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Week 11: Mission: Rescue Life

Sheila Walsh

Resisting the devil

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm glad you could join us.

One of the things I thought might be kind of fun this year, kind of a new commitment we could do is I would love on some days on this show to be able to take your prayer requests and agree with you in prayer. Because I got a couple of letters on my desk when I got back from a trip recently. They were from a woman saying, "I feel like I'm completely by myself." One is in a nursing home, doesn't get out much. She is able to get to church on Sunday because someone will come and pick her up in her wheelchair.

But one of the things I love about the gift of television or even if you're watching on computer is that you're not alone, that we can join together, that we can pray for one another, that we can encourage each other. So I just want you to know if there is something that's really on your heart then we would love the privilege here at *LIFE*. You get to see me sitting here on the sofa but there is a bunch of us here and we care about you. And we want you to know God sees you. You are not alone.

One of the things I thought might be helpful is to look at some of the things we're instructed to do in scripture and kind of unpack them. If you think about it, there are so many things we're told to do and we want to obey God but we don't always know how do I do that?

So for today, I want us to look at a verse that might be familiar to you. It is found in James Chapter 4, verse seven and it says this: So humble yourself before God. Resist the

devil, and he will flee from you.

It sounds simple enough but how do we do that? How do we resist the devil? Perhaps you face the same temptation over and over and it trips you up every time. I have a dear friend at the moment who is really struggling with alcoholism. She will make these commitments that she'll never do this again. But the temptation comes and she reaches for the bottle and she feels so defeated.

It might not be something as serious as that. Perhaps you've committed that this year you want to live a healthier life and you just want to put that donut down. But there is something inside of you that -- we get stuck into bad habits. But I want to know, okay, so if it is something that we feel we're called to do by God but we're struggling with, then how do we resist the enemy and do what God has called us to do?

Well, Christ left us the perfect pattern. It is found in Luke Chapter 4, verses 1-13. Let me read the first two verses. This is right after Christ has been baptized. He said: Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil for 40 days. Jesus ate nothing at that time and became very hungry.

It is hard for you and I to imagine what that place is actually like. If you've ever been there you'll know there's stony, barren slopes of the Jordan Mountains toward the Dead Sea and the Jordan River valley. Also, then it was a very, very dangerous place. It was where robbers and revolutionaries, those trying to overthrow the government, would gather. Regular people never went there. They avoided the wilderness at all costs.

But not Jesus. He followed the Holy Spirit in faith and for 40 days and 40 nights he was alone without family, without friends, without fellowship, with no food. Only one other person ventured into the desert with Jesus, and that was the devil. This -- I don't know if you've thought about this before but this is such a powerful story because it had to come from Christ's lips because other than the enemy, he was the only one there. So he was the

one who told this story.

So think about it. For over a month, no food at all. And this wasn't a requirement of Jewish law. Christ was setting a pattern for us. When we are in the battle of our life with the enemy we need to be face to face with God. All distractions gone.

I think it is interesting that the children of Israel wandered for 40 years in the desert and got it all wrong. Now Christ will face down the enemy for 40 days and nights and he will overcome.

Well, we come to the first temptation in verse three. This is what the devil says. Then the devil said to him, "If you are the son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread."

That seems like such a simple thing. You're hungry, you are God, there are stones all around so why not meet your own needs? Just turn one or two of them into bread? How did Jesus respond?

This is what we read in Luke 4:4: But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'"

Why was what the enemy proposing wrong? He wanted Jesus to use his power for his own needs. Christ was on mission from the Father to obey, to serve -- not to serve himself. One of our greatest temptations is grounded in our hunger and that shows up in all sorts of different ways. It can be sex, which can be a powerful temptation. I used to think that it was only men who struggled with online pornography until I got a letter from a young college student and she told me how much she struggles with online pornography and that she is not alone. I was so grateful for her honesty. It gave me a new thing to pray for.

So it can be in the area of sex but it can be in the area of food, it can be stuff. You know we want a bigger house, we want a nicer car, whatever it is there's a hunger; we want it

and we want it now. What Jesus did, how he went against that temptation was he made it really clear, no! We don't live just by the things that make us feel good.

Now the next temptation was devastating. If Jesus had said "yes" to this temptation there would have been no hope for you and for me.

This is what we read: Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "Because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I'll give it all to you if you will worship me."

Satan took Christ high on a mountain and showed him the kingdoms of the world and offered them to him. The kingdoms of the world encompassed the great Roman Empire. But Christ was on his way to the cross. What Satan was saying, "Forget the cross. You don't have to do it that way. I will give you everything you want without the suffering."

You might be tempted to think Satan had nothing to offer but in John 14 Jesus said this: "I don't have much more time to talk to you because the ruler of this world approaches."

Now we know this as we look to the future. Revelation 11 tells us this: "The world has now become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever."

But what Satan was offering Jesus in the wilderness that day was a shortcut to the glory without the suffering. If Jesus, the only sinless man had said, "Yes" we would all be lost. But he did not.

Jesus replied, "The scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'"

Satan is always happy to offer you, to offer me an easy way out of pain and suffering. Do

you find yourself in a tough place right now? Maybe you've been waiting on God to show up. And quite honestly, you're tired of waiting and you're tempted to take an easy way out.

I got a letter from a woman and it was a heartbreaking letter. She said, "All my life I wanted to honor God. I was single and I wanted -- I knew that God was going to bring the right husband and I waited and I waited. And I got tired of waiting so I just went to a bar one night and I met a guy. And now we're married and I'm miserable."

See what Satan will offer us looks tempting. The thing is God loves us. The enemy hates us. He will never offer anything good. It might look good in the moment but it will disappear very, very quickly.

I don't know what you struggle with but when I look at what was offered to Christ, I mean Jesus knew the path that was ahead. He knew the agony that awaited him for crucifixion. He knew the agony that was going to be in the garden and the separation from his Father and he was being offered, "Here's what you love. You can have it all. You don't have to suffer."

And how did Christ resist? By using the Word of God. Christ always directed attention back to the Word of God. This is our shield. When you feel tempted, keep your Bible close by. This is our shield.

Well, the final temptation is this: Then the devil took him to Jerusalem to the highest point of the temple and said, "If you are the son of God, jump off for the scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you and they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'"

That was a temptation to show who you are -- show the world! You know you're going to go out there and preach and nobody is going to listen to you but you could prove to them in an instant how much power you have, what you can do for them. He took Jesus to

Jerusalem, the highest point of the temple and he told him, "Look down on this beautiful city of people you love. They will really be at your foot in a minute if you listen to me."

And then of course, Satan could quote scripture. He quotes Psalm 91, verses 11 and 12, basically saying, "Come on, Jesus! God's faithful. He will rescue you. In midair everyone will see and they'll all fall at your feet. Your ministry, your mission will be accomplished. I'll help a little. Just quickly jump off and wait for God to show up." Almost as if he is tempting God to keep his promise.

But when we read God's word, it is so important that we read it in context. That we read the whole Word of God. You know what? We can take one verse out of context and build a whole theology around it but it is bad theology. Because let me read this to you. What Satan quoted was Psalm 91, verses 11 and 12. He didn't quote what came before. Nine and ten say this: If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you, no plague will come near your home."

Satan can quote scripture but he will take it out of context. It is not enough just to find one verse that you like and copy that out and live your life by it. We need to understand the whole canon of scripture and Christ showed us how he resisted the enemy -- prayer! Prayer is huge.

In 2019 I have a fresh commitment in my own personal life to commit to praying. You think at this stage and age in my life, well, you must do that all the time. I don't! But I want to. I want to rediscover the power there is in aligning my will with the will of God. And the other thing that Christ did was obedience. He simply obeyed God. And then the power of the Word of God. Now think about this. If the son of God used the Word of God to combat the enemy of God, why would you and I think that we could or should do anything differently?

I feel as if I've had a bit of a wake-up call at the beginning of a new year. I feel as if the Lord is saying, "I want you to get back to the very basics." We see what's going on

around us every day but I want you to remember that we don't battle against flesh and blood but there are spiritual battles going on, and you and I get to live differently. If you're facing some great temptation, how do you overcome that?

I think of my friend who's struggling with the bottle. I don't know what that's like but I know it has to be horrible. So what she does now is I've said, "Okay, the minute you feel that, pick up the phone and call me. I don't care if it is three in the morning."

That's why we have the body of Christ. We need one another. I would really encourage you to find an accountability partner. Now not someone who is going to judge you, you need that like you need a hole in the head. I mean someone who is going to love you and encourage you to be more like Jesus. Find an accountability partner and when you're struggling just say, "Help!"

But I really encourage you in your own spiritual life to carve out some time to pray. Something I've started to do is when I was speaking last time at Saddleback Church they gave me this fun little basket in my hotel room. One of things was just a blank notebook with the word *worship* in front. So now in the morning, I'll do my daily devotional, my Bible reading but then I'll sit with this blank journal and a pencil and I just wait. I wait on the Lord to speak to me. And then I study God's word. That's how Jesus resisted the devil.

And it said then the devil left him for a season. So in James he tells us resist the devil and he will flee from you. Use the power of prayer, simple obedience to God, lining your will up with the Word of God. And then studying scripture so that you know what God's word says. We have not been left defenseless. This is the sword of the spirit. Keep it close at all times.

One of the things I've realized is some of the missions we get to do here at *LIFE* are more challenging than others. What I'm about to introduce to you is very challenging. There are places on the earth where the enemy seems to have such a stronghold but we're coming in

in the name of Jesus to make a difference. Watch this.

On the mission field

Open Captions:

>> I remember waking up in a room alone, and later, I saw other girls. I didn't know I had been sold until that day.

Announcer: Ria had a very happy childhood with a close-knit family and community until the day everything changed. She was 18 when a close, trusted family friend asked her to travel with him to visit his wife. As they embarked on the trip this "friend" offered her a cool drink on a hot afternoon. The next three days were a blur and confusion gave way to fear when Ria realized she was locked in a brothel.

Open Captions:

>> There was no way to escape. Even the windows didn't show the outside world.

Announcer: Ria initially refused to cooperate. Several days of severe beatings and starvation buried her will to fight and forced her to submit. Her new life placed her in a daily lineup where her body was sold to as many as 12 men for a day.

Open Captions:

>> I felt like I was trapped in a cage. I used to think I would die there and I would never see my family again.

Announcer: After years of isolation and enslavement, deliverance drew near. A targeted rescue effort successfully liberated Ria and a number of other girls.

Open Captions:

>> I felt so free like I was pulled out of hell and into heaven. I saw my family after such a long time and cried tears of joy.

Announcer: Thankfully, Ria has a new chance at life but the work is not done. The tentacles of traffickers continue to spread throughout Asia and beyond, snagging untold thousands of daughters, sisters, friends. As the hands and feet of Jesus our reach must extend farther and our endurance must run deeper. Too many girls still need a lifeline.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: This is just the worst kind of evil -- absolutely demonic from the pit of hell. I just recently got back from a trip and every time I'm in Southeast Asia I see things that I've never seen before, and I can't even imagine such evil.

On this last trip we were showing all down one street, there were brothels with young girls and some of them *very* young. Right across the street, it was hard for me to even imagine that this was true, was a hotel that has been built specifically for pedophiles who would fly in and say, "I want a six-year old for three days." Absolutely sickening!

And I got to look into one of the little cells where these girls were kept and the lock was on the outside of the door. This is not just -- there are some things we talk to you about and it's a different kind of issue where there are children who need food or people who need clean water or shoes, but this is the kingdom of God coming up against the kingdom of the enemy -- absolute evil. I believe the only hope and the only help is the body of Christ. And I'm so grateful.

We have some partners and you may well be watching, you may be one of them who have said, "We get how evil this is so we're going to partner with you." So what we have is that we have a matching gift of \$320,000 because what we want to do is to be able to

reach, to rescue, and also to restore 5,000 girls trapped in sex trafficking.

So if you're able to say give... it used to be if you could give \$128 then we would be able to rescue one girl. But because of our matching gift, if you're able to give \$128 now two girls, we will grab hold of their hands. And that might be a little much for you and your budget, I get that but now, if you're able to give \$64, our partners will match that with you and together rescue one child. \$1280 will rescue 20 girls.

So please, this is not something that we can turn a blind eye to. As long as this exists on the earth, you and I, as sons and daughters of the King of kings have got to do something. This is a billion dollar industry, very well organized, very well-funded, and you and I, in the name of Jesus need to be equally organized. But even more than that, ours is bathed in prayer and the Holy Spirit. So I'm asking you to act now. Would you please go to your phone, make the best gift possible? Go online, let's do this in Jesus' name.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Behind the bright lights there is a darkness where a world of innocence is lost and abuse runs rampant scarring the souls of children with no one and nowhere to turn for help. With bodies broken and hopes crushed, these young victims are trapped in a never-ending nightmare.

Today, you can shine the light of God's love in this dark world to reach, rescue, and restore these young ones to the life God designed for them to live. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

And with your donation of any amount, we'll send you *The Promises of Christ* gift book filled with beautiful photographs, scriptures, stories, and commentary from James Robison.

With your gift of \$128 or more you'll receive "The Names of Jesus" throw. This beautifully woven blanket features the names of Jesus in many languages. It will make a lovely addition to your home and serve as a beautiful reminder and spiritual comfort to the Lordship of our savior.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help rescue 20 children. And you may request our beautiful new bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

Sheila: Honestly, I don't think anything quite prepared me for this trip. I sat down and talked to a young girl who was basically sold into trafficking by her mother and father. When they need more money, instead of them finding a way to get it, they turn to their daughters. One of them is 15 now and the other one is 17. They have been basically sold every night in a karaoke bar where they have to persuade these men, these clients to drink a lot and then they have to be willing to go and sleep with these men.

When I look into the eyes of these little girls, they're just little girls. This cannot be their future. I feel that once we know something, you can't unknow it and that's why we're here on behalf of *LIFE Today*, on behalf of *LIFE Outreach International* because we have to reach these girls before we can rescue them, before we can restore them. That's our commitment to these girls, "Not only do we want to sit down and talk with you, we want to get you out of the place where you are and put you in a safe place so that you can begin the healing process of being restored." And we're doing it all in the name of Jesus.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! Please keep calling. Whenever I get back from a trip like that, it is so hard. For the first few days I'm literally lying on my bedroom floor praying and beseeching God that somehow we're able to communicate with you how urgent this need is. These young girls are there right now.

We have some beautiful gifts to give. *The Promises of Christ*, you will love that! It is a beautiful book. James has shared some insight in there that I know you'll love. And that lovely throw as well to have in your home. But let's determine that on our watch we will not allow this evil to flourish. So go to your phone, make the best gift possible.

Thank you so much for being with me today on *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. God bless you. I'll see you next time!