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Week 19: Spring Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

"The Power of Praying God's Word"

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad that you've joined us.

I've been thinking a lot over the last probably two years about prayer. God has really been placing on my heart that somehow it's almost like this unused weapon in the church. That we've been given this incredible ability to join our hearts and our minds and our spirits and our souls with heaven, and pray and intercede and make a difference in our own hearts, in our families, in our homes, across the nation but somehow we tend to kind of leave it almost like as a last resort. We'll try and fix things ourselves if something is not going well. Then we'll think, if that doesn't work then we'll pray.

Well, I want you to know God is on the move. Something is happening. I feel it in my spirit. I believe! How long have we talked about longing for revival, wanting to see God move in this nation? But I feel as if we're on the edge of something but it's going to begin when we take God's word seriously and begin to pray.

Let me tell you how it started for me a couple of years ago. I woke up one morning and my husband, Barry and I have been married for 25 years this year. That means I get something silver doesn't it? I need to start thinking about it. But he said to me, "God woke me up in the middle of the night and told me that we should get the web site, Praying Women."

I was like, "Oh! Okay!"

So we kind of looked to see if that was available and it was. But it was a little bit of

money; we had to pay for it. So I said, "Let's really pray and ask God because I don't want to put something... invest in something that's maybe not right."

So we both prayed about it and had this huge internal witness from the Spirit, "Nope, you're to do this."

So we got the web site and then it was kind of like okay, Lord, now what? Nothing. So maybe about four months after that I got an invitation from a friend of mine, her name is Diane Strack and she said, "I've been invited to bring 20 evangelical female leaders for a meeting at the White House. Are you available?"

I said, "Honestly, I don't really know." I said, "Let me check my schedule and I'll get back to you."

Well, by the time she got back to me she said, "Actually, it's all changed. I can only bring four but I really feel as if you're meant to be one of the four."

So I asked the Lord, "Is this something you want me to do?" And I felt yes.

So we decided that because I didn't know the other women that we would meet for brunch before we went over for this meeting. So when I went in they were all already there and they were all talking and seemed to be concerned about something or confused about something. So I sat down and introduced myself. And I said, "So what were you guys talking about?"

They said, "Well, God has really laid something on our hearts. We feel like we're supposed to be part of a new women's prayer movement. We've been trying to get the web site, Praying Women, but somebody has already got it. I was like, "Me!" I told them how God had woken my husband up and put that on our hearts several months before that. I went on and I went to the meeting and it was fine but the whole reason I was there was to meet these four women. Because God started something in just that little nucleus

of women who didn't know each other but loved Jesus and longed for revival in this nation.

So it's now 20 of us, and in fact, I want to give you a heads up. A kind of "Save the date" if you will. If you'd go ahead and write in pencil in your calendar -- no do it in pen. Do it in faith. February the 15th, the day after Valentine's Day, 2020, we're going to have the first event for this women's prayer movement. The kind of hashtag is: #she loves out loud.

We just feel like there is so much anger in our nation and so often when women's voices are heard their voices are being raised in anger and dividing and that is a tool of Satan. One of his greatest tools is division. So what our prayer is that by January of next year we would have a million women committed to pray. And then the day after Valentine's Day, which seems the perfect day to talk about the love of God for our nation that we will have probably ten events on the same night across America simulcast into hundreds of churches.

I believe that's what God wants us to do. If every woman and man, but if every one of us began to take God seriously and began to really rise up in prayer can you imagine what would happen in our nation?

When I read Ephesians six where Paul talks about putting on the full armor of God, do you remember what it says at the beginning of that passage? We do not fight against flesh and blood. It's about spiritual forces behind that. It's very easy to watch the news or to go on Facebook and hear what people are saying and for our anger to be against the people but the enemy is what's behind those people.

We have an enemy who is alive, who is active and one of the things he wants believers to do is to stop praying and stop reading their bibles. I had the privilege of being part of an event to promote the new movie of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It's a beautiful animation, fantastic!

But one of the scenes, I got to preview the movie before I conducted a panel discussion with the director and producers, and one of the scenes is between Christian, the protagonist in the story and Satan. And the number one thing that Satan wants Christian to do is put down his sword. You know his sword is the Word of God. And he keeps saying to Christian, "Put down your sword. Put down your sword." And Christian refuses to.

So I believe that if we, as the family of God, begin to dig deep into the Word of God again and learn how to pray -- but that's one of the things I want to talk about. I'm working on a new book called *Praying Women*; what to pray when you do not know what to say. Because sometimes, we want to pray but if you're really honest sometimes we get bored.

Sometimes we think I said the same thing yesterday and the same thing the day before. Or else you're in the middle of praying for Africa and suddenly you think I didn't defrost the chicken. You get so distracted. So I'm thinking, Lord, you have told us all to pray, which means I gave my life to Christ when I was 11. Some of my friends gave their lives to Christ at five.

So if you're a five-year old or you're 85, if you've got a doctorate in some letters in English, you've been asked to pray. And if you're somebody who never was able to even learn to read or write, we've all been called to pray. So why have we made it so hard and so complicated?

Well, I think God's been showing me some things that sometimes I write a book because of things that God is showing me and I want to unpack but writing this book that I'm working on now is literally changing my life.

But let me tell you a story about my granddad. When I was growing up in Scotland, my mom's dad, my granddad was what we call in Scotland a "doer man" which means very

stern. And he had a certain way of doing things that that was the way you do it. And particularly, when it came to saying grace or saying a prayer before our meals it was always the same and done in the strong "doer" Scottish accent and he would say, "For what we're about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen."

Well, on this particular occasion missionaries were home on furlough and they were coming to my grandparents' house for lunch because they were going to be at the evening service again that night. So the whole family was invited for lunch. Well, my grandmother wanted to make them feel really welcome and she wanted it all to be special. So she brought out her wedding china instead of the usual stuff. She brought out the family silver. She had beautiful roses picked from her garden put in a crystal vase, and she had a white linen table cloth. And everything was fresh and new apart from my grandfather.

So she said to my granddad, "Listen. Do you think just on this occasion, William, you could expand your grace just a little bit?"

He kind of grunted and you never knew if that was a grunt of affirmation or just a grunt. Only time would tell. So on this particular occasion after the morning service and the missionaries were brought back home to my grandmother's home, sat around this beautiful table and then it was my grandfather big moment.

So we all bowed our heads and my grandfather said, "For what we are about to receive."

Well, at that point my grandmother realizes he is just going for the same grace so she kicks him under the table. And then there was a little pause as he said, "For what we're about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful and... and make me a good boy!"

He was 72 years old! I mean I literally laughed -- I mean I fell off the chair laughing. My grandmother made a noise kind of similar to somebody stepping on bag pipes. And my grandfather was humiliated because we had moved him out of his comfort zone. He

thought there was one way to pray. And when he was asked to ad-lib a bit it completely through him.

Well, I did a little thing a couple weeks ago on Facebook. I decided just to put a little post, in fact, you may well have been one of the ones who answered it and if you were thank you. I said, "What do you find challenging about prayer?"

I wrote down a few of your responses because within two hours I got 650 comments. Here's some of them: I get distracted. I feel like I'm saying the same things over and over. What's the point if God knows what's going to happen anyway? How do I know what I'm supposed to ask God for? A really honest one: I get bored. How do I know that God hears me? I didn't get an answer last time so why pray? And then: I feel too depressed and too sad to pray. But this one thing showed up over and over: I can't stay focused, my mind wanders.

Well, I totally get that and I think most of us if we're honest understand that. But here is what I've discovered. You and I have the greatest prayer book ever offered to anyone. I never pray now without having my Bible open in front of me. That's how I have my quiet time now because if you think about it, and particularly the Psalms. The Psalms were given to the people of God to be able to pray back to God. And so whatever you're walking through one of these Psalms is going to cover it.

Now if you say I feel like I pray for the same things over and over, well that makes sense because like I'll use my own life, every day I pray for my husband Barry. Every day I pray for my son Christian. I pray for the staff here at *LIFE Outreach*. I pray for my pastor, Jack Graham. So there are certain things we are going to pray but if you use the Psalms as a guide it will help.

So let me show you what I do. Let me just take a very well-known Psalm for example, Psalm 23. So we're going to use that as our template for prayer. So here's how I go.

"The Lord is my shepherd." Lord, thank you so much that you shepherd me through life. Thank you that there is never a moment when you take your eyes off of me. I ask today that you would shepherd Barry through his day, shepherd Christian through his day. If he starts to take a wrong path, Lord, with your staff, would you help him find the right way?

And then you carry on. "I have all that I need." Thank you, Lord that you are our provider. I don't always have all that I want but you give me all that I need. I pray today for the missions of *LIFE Outreach*. There is so much need out there, Lord. Help me to be an answer to some of these prayers.

"He lets me rest in green meadows. He leads me beside peaceful streams." Lord, thank you that that's your desire for every one of us. You want us to find a place in every day where we can just be quiet, where we can rest. Help me to find that quiet place in you today. Help James and Betty, in the midst of all that they've got going, to find some rest, to be able to be beside quiet streams today.

"He renews my strength." Lord, thank you. You are the one who renews our strength. So often we look to other things but you are our strength. You are our helper. I pray Lord, today that I would be aware of you renewing my strength to serve you more and more.

"He guides me along right paths bringing honor to his name." Lord, that's my desire. I want to walk along straight paths and bring honor to your name. So I ask that you would grant that in my life.

"Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid for you're close beside me." Lord, I pray for my friends, Jenna Lee, walking through a dark, dark time right now. Pray for Brent as he faces another surgery for his brain. Lord, even in that dark valley, would you let them know that you are right beside them? That they don't have to be afraid?

"Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me." Lord, what a gift it is to have a

shepherd who protects, who keeps the enemy away and who comforts us when dark things come into our life.

"You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies." Thank you, Lord that we don't have to be afraid of whoever is out there saying things about us on Facebook or tearing us apart. You prepare a feast. Every good thing that comes from you is so much greater than anything else that could happen.

And we go on. "You honor me by anointing my head with oil, my cup overflows with blessings." Lord, I'm going to take a few minutes today and I'm going to write down everything I'm grateful for, all the blessings you pour out on my life.

"Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life and I will live in the house of the Lord forever." Lord, what a future I have in you. Thank you that you have given me life. But thank you that I have a future and I have a hope.

Do you see how we can use God's word to be our prayer guide? When you work your way through the Psalms, what I do is when I finish praying through one Psalm I put a little tic beside it. And if there is something particular that touches me on that day or a particular prayer request I'll write the date beside it. And once I worked my way all the way through, I'll come back to the beginning again. And sometimes I'll even see the way that God has answered a prayer.

But if you struggle to pray, if you feel like you get distracted, I want you to know you have been given such a gift in the Word of God, God's prayer manual. But for those of you I have one more thing to show you. For those of you who feel, you know what? I'm going through so much right now. I'm thinking of my friend whose husband is facing another surgery for the fourth time, and they're both, honestly, they're worn out. But this is what it says in Romans Chapter 8, and this is in verses 26 and 27: And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.

For example, "We don't know what God wants us to pray for but the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying for the Spirit pleads with us believers in harmony with God's own will."

Isn't that amazing to know? If you find yourself in a difficult place today, perhaps you're even watching this in a hospital bed or maybe you're sick at home or maybe you're just broken. Maybe you're in a place where you're like, Sheila, I would love to join your prayer movement but I can hardly get out of bed. I want you to know you have an advocate in heaven. A Holy Spirit is calling your name out right now, right at the Father's side. And not only that, he knows what God's will is for your life. So he prays in accordance with God's will for you.

We are covered by the blood of the lamb but we have not been left alone. We have been given the ability to pray and we've been given the ability to pick up the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God. So when you hear the enemy coming up saying to you, "Put down your sword," you lift it high in Jesus' name knowing that our strength is found in this living word.

One of the things that God's word makes so clear to us is that in the way that we have been comforted, it says it in Second Corinthians chapter one, "In the way we have been comforted we now have the ability and the calling to comfort others." And I'm going to show you a very practical, very real way that you and I can do that right now.

On the mission field

Isak: On this trip we've been to villages where we've seen children singing and dancing. We've heard life and we've seen why. Because they've been waiting in line to receive a bowl of food.

Mission feeding, we say it saves lives but here's the reality of what it does. Because on

the same trip we've visited villages where mothers have told us of how they labor tirelessly to try and provide food for their children but they can't provide enough. Where in one village, one mother says, "I lost three children last year." Another says, "I lost two." Another says, "I lost five!"

We're trying to communicate to you what that means. We try and create an understanding and draw a picture for you. And now you see it -- a child that is lifeless, desperate. Now you see what those mothers go through. Those are not just stories. That's not a mother just flippantly saying, "Well I lost two children this last year." No! Mothers sitting in clinics like this watching their children's lives stolen -- literally stolen away from them. Why? Because they couldn't give them enough food. Something that you and I can change so easily, something that takes so little to change and yet has such a massive impact.

The Bible says to us that no man can give a greater gift than to give his life for another. I'm just asking you to save the life of this precious child. Please! Give the gift of life.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: That was, of course, Isak Pretorius the son of a wonderful hero who is now at home with Jesus, Peter Pretorius. And what Isak was showing us is something that's happening right at this very moment. These mothers bringing in these children who are literally starving to death.

The last time I was over in Africa, so many of these moms, they're exhausted because from the first thing in the morning until last thing at night they are doing anything they can to try and find the littlest bit of food. But when there's been no rain and no crops there is nothing. And they walk for miles. They will do whatever it takes to be able to feed their children. And all they're asking is would we help them?

This is not a have to, this is a *privilege* to be able to be literally the hands of Christ to so many who are suffering and struggling. We have made a promise to Isak and all of our other partners on the ground there in so many parts of Africa: Angola, South Sudan, places where children are dying every single day.

I've knelt by the graves where the families have left any little thing they can as a marker for the fact that "my child lived. I had a daughter." What we promised to do is to continue feeding 400,000 children this year. And the amazing thing is we can do it so easily.

Do you know, \$30, if you were to pull \$30 out of your wallet right now and think how quickly that would go? Some days I'll go into the grocery store thinking I'm going in for one thing and before I know it I've spent \$40. But \$30 will feed three children for three whole months!

The bowls of food that we give them is food that's been specially made to provide all the nutritional needs that these children have to turn them from death to life. I've had the privilege of handing out these bowls. And these children, they stand so patiently in line waiting for a bowl of food. And when you've gone from a village where we have been able to set up mission feeding and see that they're just the way children should be, laughing and happy and learning and a future and a hope. Then you go to the malnutrition clinics and we think we cannot allow this to go on.

You and I could fix this in our lifetime if we all determined to do something. \$50 feeds five children for three months. \$100, 10 children for three whole months! So what could you do? Maybe you've given before but I'm asking you in Jesus' name would you give again? Because the needs are still there. We want to make sure that when these children show up again that we have a bowl of food for them.

So please, would you give your best gift possible? Would you go online, would you call the number on your screen? Would you do it now so that we can feed these children and

wipe the tears from the faces of their loving mothers?

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 from starvation in parts of Angola, Mozambique and South Sudan.

With previous reserves gone and mission feeding helping in areas of great famine, we urgently need your support to replenish food supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us. Your life saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children.

With your gift we'll send you *The James Code* by O.S. Hawkins, an outstanding devotional to help you go from knowing about God to living for God, and putting your faith into action. You will also enjoy this beautifully grafted leather bookmark.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request *The Passion* translation Bible. This New Testament edition including Psalms and Proverbs ignites *The Passion* of the Bible to modern readers by merging *The Passion* of God's heart for his children with the life-changing truth of his word.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our commemorative bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call write or make your gift online today.

End of clip

On the mission field

Isak: I sit here in this malnutrition clinic with these three mothers who whose lives potentially are changed forever. Mothers desperate to see their children survive. Children fighting, fighting malnutrition. Something as simple as not enough food. So please join hands with me, with these mothers, with our staff that are here, and most importantly, for these children.

With your gift of \$30 you can save these three children's lives. If you can give \$50 today you can save five children. Maybe you could find it in your heart to give \$100 because that gift of \$100 will bring life to ten children.

Please, do whatever you can do today. Help us to carry on our work here. Help us to continue what we've started because there are so many lives that we still need to reach.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! I love our partners. You guys are great. You don't know how this encourages James and Betty when you keep giving. You didn't just do it once, you keep giving. And just on their behalf, I just want to say thank you. You're amazing.

And for any gift at all, we'll give you this great book, *The James Code*: 52 scripture principles for putting your faith in action. And for a gift of \$100 we'll send you this *Passion Bible* which is beautiful to read. I know you don't do it for the gifts but we just want to find some little way of blessing you for the way that you help us bless others.

So if the phone line was busy, keep calling. Let's make sure we answer those prayers. For *LIFE Today*, I'm Sheila Walsh saying good-bye. God bless you!