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Week 21: Spring Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

Kathie Lee Gifford

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm particularly glad that you're joining me today. You're used to just seeing me sitting here on the set but when I knew I had an opportunity to interview the woman I'm about to introduce to you I said, "You name the day, you name the time, I will be here with bells on." You're going to be incredibly blessed by my guest. And in fact, why don't you go text somebody right now and say tune in? Please help me welcome our amazing guest, Kathie Lee Gifford.

Kathie: Thank you!

Sheila: It's such a joy!

Kathie: It's been years since I've seen you. Boy, has time been good to us!

Sheila: Yes, indeed!

Kathie: You look great!

Sheila: So do you! But one of the interesting things is I watched -- and my husband and I never missed you and Hoda. We just loved it. We said all your lines along with you. But I watched you last week and on the second to last episode, what blew me away was what every single person on The Today Show said about you and about your faith. It blew me away. Were you surprised by the depth of the impact your life's had on them?

Kathie: Well, I've spent 11 years with those people. Some of them are newer and some of the others have gone on, not to the Lord yet, but had left the show for different reasons. You pray that you leave your mark on every person. You pray that -- my daddy used to say every time I did anything, first of all he would say, "Honey, be the best they ever had. Then treat everybody exactly the same. Treat them with God's love."

So I'm not a perfect person. I was as surprised by the people that I know that I've had an impact on, I've led them to the Lord or they're going to church or they've had miscarriages and we prayed that they would have children, those kind of miraculous things. But I was surprised at the party that they gave me that was private how many people that I didn't even know. I was just humbled by it.

What do you want? Do you want a trophy room full of enemies? Or do you want a 1,000 trophies in heaven of people that came to know their Lord and savior and are walking with him and have joy in their life, and peace, and all the things that can only happen if you have the Holy Spirit in your life.

Sheila: The thing that was so clear was when in First Peter when it talks about always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within you. That often I think, more by your life than your words; that you spoke of the goodness of God.

Kathie: Well, was it Augustine that said, "Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

Sheila: Brilliantly said well. This book *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi*, I have to tell you, when I got hold of this book -- sometimes I read books because I want to honor my guest and I just want to make sure I've read it. This one was like a gift from the Lord.

Kathie: I'm so glad!

Sheila: So profound. Tell me how this came to be.

Kathie: It's called *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi* and I wrote it with a brilliant Bible scholar named Rabbi Jason Sobel. I'd been privileged to go to the Holy Land so many times since I was 17 years old, and work there and study there.

But I started studying rabbinically in 2012. Ever since then everything changed for me. I thought I knew the Bible. I'd been a student of the Bible all my life. I've read it all the way through 11 times and studied it also, my whole life. I went on this trip with Ray Vander Laan from *That the World May Know*. You can get his videos. They're incredible. And it rocked my world.

"The rock" in the title is Jesus. "The road" of course is the Holy Land. And "the rabbi" is not just Rabbi Sobel but the word as taught by the rabbis who go ten layers deeper than anything we've ever learned in Sunday school.

From my studies I had truly gotten to a point where I couldn't go to many churches because I'd listen sitting there and I'd go but that's not true. That's not true. And I'd get frustrated. And then I'd listen to the hymns being sung with theology that's not true and it would frustrate me because my faith had gotten very stale when I took that trip in 2012. And all of the sudden, there was a fire that was lit inside me again. Why? Because of the Word of God. The word.

Sheila: Is that the one that Frank was with you on?

Kathie: It's the one my husband went on and it transformed his life. He'd been -- he said, "I know the Bible. I was saved when I was kid." He didn't know anything! You know what I found out after all the years of study? I didn't know anything.

So it was thrilling to me to discover that unless you study the Word of God in its original text, the Hebrew in the Old Testament and the Greek in the New, you're being sold a pack

of lies. That's exactly what Satan wants. He is the deceiver. He does not want us to know the truth. He doesn't want us to because it sets us free.

Sheila: Yeah! Absolutely! But honestly, we could do a two-hour show but I know you have a life.

Kathie: Not much of one anymore.

Sheila: There's so much in here. I just wanted to touch on a couple of things. Like even where Christ was born. When we talk about Bethlehem and Jesus being born, you know all the Christmas cards have this little stable with straw and a couple of cows. But the revelation that you have in here from the rabbi is profoundly different.

Kathie: That's what blew my mind. I thought I'd heard that story many, many -- we all think we know -- first of all Jesus was not born in December, the rainy season. And he was not born in a stable. They don't have stables. All the animals -- they're born in caves in the shepherds fields. And so, bad translation.

The other thing about it that is unbelievable is Jesus was actually conceived during that time. It's Hanukkah. So in a way he was born then. But the festival of Hanukkah, the light of the world. "He who follows me will not stumble in darkness, will have the light of life."

He was actually born nine months later during Sukkot, the festival of Sukkot, which is the Feast of Tabernacles. That's when the Jews celebrated the fact that they were redeemed from slavery. Moses was the first sort of foreshadowing of what was going to happen when the Messiah finally came. So Jesus is the one that really brought us to the real Promised Land.

So we learn things like that. What most Christians don't know because they don't understand our Jewish heritage, that we're one family. It's one story starting with God

calling Abraham from the land of Ur, which is modern day Iraq. And then building a nation and all of that, and it goes all the way through to the book of Revelation. So you cannot just concentrate on the New Testament and say but that's the one that's full of grace. All of it is full of grace.

Sheila: Jesus is there from page one.

Kathie: Jesus was there at creation with the Father, with the Holy Spirit. But then later the word became flesh and dwelt among us. So you have to study that. Every major event in Jesus' life happened during one of the major Jewish festivals.

Sheila: And there's phenomenal significance.

Kathie: And we don't even know what they are -- we don't even know what they are. We call the day that he was resurrected "Easter." That's not the word. It's First Fruits. He died on Passover and the resurrection is First Fruits Sunday. We don't even study it or know it. We don't go to Seders. We don't go to --

Sheila: You know I've never been. I read your book and I thought, the first Seder that's available I'm going to be there.

Kathie: Well, Reverend Jason has one I'm going to tell you about and it will rock your world! And all of the sudden you will understand the last supper. The last supper was a Seder. And all of it has unbelievable significance.

Sheila: How can I be 62 and not know this stuff? I've studied the Bible since I was a little girl.

Kathie: But not with the best teachers in the world who go ten layers down. Every time you think you know something they go but there's more. Which thrills my soul! I want more!

Sheila: And you talk about -- there's so much to talk about but even what you talk about in terms of forgiveness. I believe that the body of Christ is crippled because of unforgiveness.

Kathie: Yes!

Sheila: And you talk about the whole thing of when Peter said, "Well, do I forgive seven times?"

Kathie: He thought he was very righteous saying that. Yes!

Sheila: But 70 times seven is like the number of completion.

Kathie: 490.

Sheila: So what happens to a believer who refuses to forgive?

Kathie: They don't grow. They remain mired. They're saved but they're mired in their lack of power. When you forgive -- what did Jesus say on the cross? "Forgive them, Father they know not what they do." And what happened to him? Resurrection! That's what happens to us -- resurrection!

Sheila: You talk a lot too about Jesus and women. The way that Jesus -- you call Jesus the first feminist.

Kathie: The only radical feminist the world has ever known. I love that he appeared first in his resurrected form to a formerly mentally ill woman. What did he do? She didn't recognize him. Early in the dawn with the sun coming -- she didn't know him until he went, "Mary!"

Sheila: You said that's your favorite word.

Kathie: Because you know what he says to you? "Sheila!" And to me he says, "Kathie." And everybody -- and he says "Dan" and he says "John" and he says he knows us by name. On those hands that were crucified for us, he has our names. It's too wonderful for words. It's too wonderful!

Sheila: One of the things I wrote recently, and one of my chapters is called "Celebrate Your Scars as Tattoos of Triumph" because God tells his story in scars. I think when he looks at the scars of Christ he sees you and me.

Kathie: Of course he does and he collects our tears in bottles.

Sheila: Psalm 56, I love that!

Kathie: He gives us tears for a purpose. I know you've gone through things in your life, I certainly have. My stuff was very, very public. But no matter what trials there are, all your desert experiences, God does his best work in your deserts. They aren't fun. You get scarred from them but they're necessary. Jesus could not start his ministry until he had gone 40 days and 40 nights in the desert. 40 years in the wilderness.

What I love about Jason Sobel so much -- but he teaches that Christians have been afraid of numerology for centuries. We've been taught it's of the devil. We're not supposed to understand. Don't put your faith in numbers! We're not supposed to put our faith in numbers but we're supposed to understand that there's not one random thing in the Bible. As for God his ways are perfect and the word of the Lord is flawless if you're actually reading the right... And every number has a reason to it, and it is not there randomly as I said.

So what I love about what he teaches us, why were six pots of water turned into wine? He'll tell you why. Why was it seven days of creation? He'll tell you why. He'll also tell

you why and I think I did this part, that the word for *day* in the Hebrew is Yom: Y-O-M. Many people don't want to read the Bible. They discount it completely because they say, "We know science can't live next to faith and the creation story. Why should I waste my time reading a 5,000-year-old dead book?"

We all know it's the most alive thing in the entire world. But Yom in the Hebrew means a period of time, with a distinct beginning and a distinct end. But God is timeless and it can be any amount of time. And it also means a solar day. I don't believe it was six solar days because the sun and the moon don't show up until the fourth Yom.

Sheila: Wow! Yeah. All the questions that we have are answered in the Word of God if you understand it well.

Kathie: If you understand what it says.

Sheila: What about David? This 12 to 14-year-old shepherd boy who comes to bring his brothers' and there's this huge giant Goliath. You talk about, he explains about picking up the stones and why that was significant?

Kathie: Yes! And that's too long to explain. But I think the main thing that I talked about in my section of that was what I learned in the valley of Allah, which is everybody thinks they know the story of David and Goliath. That this amazing little young guy who couldn't even put on Saul's stuff was able to kill Goliath, a giant.

Well, let's think about this for a second. First of all, the Bible tells us that David had already slain lions and bears. Every gift David had was given to him when he was fearfully and wonderfully made in his mother's womb, same as all of us. God prepared him. God doesn't tell us to do something he hasn't equipped us to do. So he was already prepared. But the difference was the Israeli Army and King Saul were quaking in their boots for how many days? 40 days and 40 nights, again the 40 is very informative. They had religion up on that ridge.

Sheila: Which is powerless.

Kathie: David had a faith and a knowledge, a personal knowledge of the eternal God and he had relationship. He walked down, say I'll do -- why is everybody afraid of this guy? I'll do it. That's chutzpah! Chutzpah based on reality and experience. He went down, he knew exactly what he needed. Read the book and you'll find out why there was five stones. And he just -- and he says, "I come to you in the name of the eternal God of Israel whom you have defied." Boom! That's the difference.

So where are you going to throw your stone? We all have it. Throw your stone at the chaos of the world and bring God's shalom to this world.

Sheila: Don't throw it at another believer. Or another person in the world. But you talk about -- the rabbi explains in the book how that represented the power and the authority of God.

Kathie: Yes, the power and the authority. The other cool thing, if you're hit like this, like Goliath was, the normal way to fall would be back like that. Ancient times, everyone bowed to the greater God. He stumbled and then he fell forward.

Sheila: Wow! That will preach!

Kathie: The greater God.

Sheila: Oh that is so amazing.

Kathie: It's this kind of stuff that feeds your soul and fuels your faith.

Sheila: So as you look to the next few years, Kathy Lee, you obviously are in a new season, what's on your heart and your mind?

Kathie: That I'm running out of time and I want a boldness that I've never had before. I've always been bold -- I've always been bold. People say, "How do you say those things on national television? You're not on Sheila Walsh's show where I'm free to. But to say that on N.B.C. -- you used to say it with Regis."

I said, "I don't separate the secular from the spiritual in my life." Because the Word of God says in him we live and move and have our being. My faith isn't an exercise for one hour on a Sunday. It's every moment of every day. It's what we live and breathe.

So yeah, I'm in a season where I don't want to waste anything. Nothing! I'm doing films now based on oratorios that we'll talk with Nicole at one point, you and I with her, but also I've got two more written and ready to go. We're about to record those. One is called "The God of the How and When." And the next one after that is, "The God of his Word." Because we are not teaching the Bible the way it is meant to be understood.

The biggest problem with the Bible is not the Bible itself, it is with the way we interpret. And it was written by Middle Easterners for Middle Easterners centuries and centuries ago. If we don't know what that means and what was going on in the culture at the time then we've used our western mind-set to understand it. That's why people thought, the guys that translated the Greek to the English for the King James' version, which is probable the worst translation of the Bible, Jesus didn't say, "Thou mightest go to the..." Jesus spoke Hebrew. Okay? He spoke Greek probably and a little Aramaic. He did not speak the King's English; that came centuries and centuries later. Forsoothe! They saith to that mountaineth. He didn't do that! It drives me crazy. I won't even retweet somebody that quotes that. I just can't because it's not what it says.

Sheila: But when you talk about getting back to the original language and you understand then there's -- but even John 4 with the woman, the Samaritan, the woman at the well where he says, "True worship is worship in spirit and in truth," that Greek word means with nothing hidden. We come with nothing hidden. It's like when you get -- and

I'm now convinced there is probably nine more layers to that that I don't know!

Kathie: Don't you just want to sit at like a great rabbi's feet, and there are Christian rabbis too.

Sheila: Yes! Oh I know.

Kathie: Jason just happens to be Messianic rabbi. And sit at the feet. I love to do it in the Holy Land. If you can ever find a way to get to the Holy Land everything comes to life for you. That's what I love about these films we're doing. We're shooting them right where these things happened and it's transforming -- it's life transforming.

Sheila: Kathie, we, and I ask all of my audience to pray for you, to ask for fresh favor, for anointing on your life. And I want to say to you to do yourself a favor. You know that I don't -- I'm going to tell you the truth on this program. This is one of the best books I've ever read. I learned things that after years and years of study I did not know and I'm so grateful and I'm going to Israel.

Kathie: Come with the rabbi. He does tours!

Sheila: He does?

Kathie: *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi* tours!

Sheila: Kathie has been a phenomenal supporter here at *LIFE Today*. I want to show you a little of why she believes in what we're doing here and believes in James and Betty. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Isak: Now 200,000 plus children die every single month from malnutrition alone. They

die in a village like this. They get buried with a little wooden cross with their name etched on it.

Announcer: Over the past week our mission team has traveled throughout South Sudan and Uganda overwhelmed by the devastation of countless families fighting an unrelenting crisis.

Isak: We've sat with mothers here today, mothers that are grieving the loss of their children. They've explained to us that those children have died because of malnutrition, because of starvation, literally, because there is no food in this village. There is no livestock. There is no crops. There is no food at all.

Announcer: Our team witnessed further heartache in the malnutrition clinics where mothers have risked long journeys with their children for just the hope of a life-saving miracle.

Luke: I've been in places like this. Now you have your own kid that's about the same age as all them and it just -- you just can't fathom if your own child was going through something like this.

Announcer: With these dire circumstances spread throughout South Sudan, thousands of mothers have embarked on the treacherous journey seeking food.

Luke: It's not God's heart to see mothers wonder what they're going to feed their children when they wake up in the morning. So today, I'm asking you to be the solution, be the answer to these mothers and children's prayers.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: It's interesting that the first time we have that name of God in the Old Testament, Hagar -- Hagar called him "the God who sees." We have a God who sees every child who is abandoned at the moment. Every mother who is walking through desert with no food, no water, nothing to give her children. You know our commitment here at *LIFE Today*. It's been James and Betty's commitment from the beginning. We feed children because it saves their lives.

We've been to malnutrition clinics and watched children and the only reason they're taking their final breath is because their mothers, through tears, cannot feed them. We have the ability to help and we've made that commitment -- that will not change, 400,000 children. We've committed to our partners who are on the ground, to our boots on the ground in Jesus' name that those finances will be available. And it's possible. We all can do it. \$30 feeds three children. \$50 feeds five. \$100 feeds ten for three months! Can you imagine? Think of how quickly you can go through 100 but that will feed ten children for three months.

So we've committed to that for years and we will never walk away from that. But there is a fresh need. The situation in South Sudan at the moment is desperate. There is nothing. There is no food. There is no shelter. You saw the picture of children walking with -- sometimes with a mother, sometimes alone. Now those who are in that area of the world know that we have the ability to get food that will be nutritious and turn from death to life.

So what I'm asking today and this is really important, it is critical, we need an additional gift. It will take \$270,000 approximately to be able to get food into the right position, to be able to follow those broken mothers and broken children who are -- Uganda has said, "You can come here. We can give you space but we can't feed you." We can feed them so we need your help to do that.

I think James said not so long ago that its \$270,000 sounds ridiculously a lot to most of

us but if 270 people gave \$1,000 or if you had 540 gave \$500 we could do that. This is not something that's a few future project like our Christmas shoes or any of that stuff. This is a need at this very moment. These children, these mothers, these people who have -- can you imagine as a mom and you don't have a home? You don't have a roof? It's not even that they lost their beautiful homes, they lost the shacks that were their homes. And now they have nothing.

So you and I, we're the body of Christ on the planet at this moment. We can make a difference. Please, please go to your phone and give the best gift possible. Would you please do it now? And would you consider giving an extra gift? We need your help like we've never needed it before.

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.

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 for three full months!

Please consider an extra gift to help ease the suffering of innocent families who, due to tribal warfare, have had to flee their homes in South Sudan to neighboring Uganda, in desperate search of food.

World Food representatives have asked for our immediate assistance. That's why an additional \$270,000 is urgently needed to help provide food to those who are starving.

With your gift, we'll send you The James Code by O.S. Hawkins. You'll also enjoy this beautifully crafted leather bookmark.

With your gift of \$100 or more request *The Passion* translation Bible. This edition ignites *The Passion* of the Bible to modern readers by merging *The Passion* of God's heart 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.

End of clip

On the mission field:

Isak: I so clearly remember when I first came to South Sudan many, many years ago. I remember walking through some of the villages here, a lot like this village I'm in today, just being shocked -- shocked by the fact that there could be a place on earth where mothers bury their children every month, every week, some places like this village, every day.

I come to you today as I talk about what we saw then and what we see now. The fact that over these years we've been able to save so many millions of lives. We've had such a huge impact here in South Sudan. And yet, today we come into a village that we've just started working in and we talk to mothers, mother after mother who tell us their devastating stories.

We have to continue what we're doing in this village and we have to reach the villages next door to here that we're not getting to yet, where children are literally starving to death. This is a crisis and it is a crisis that only we can solve because we are here. And

with the gifts of the friends of LIFE we can bring life to these villages.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much. If the lines are busy keep calling. We need to help these moms and their children that are being driven out of their home in Sudan. They're starving. The borders have been open so that they can go someplace. They have no home. They have nothing. Please, please help us.

If you want we would love to send you Kathie Lee's book. Or just go on anywhere, go to Amazon, go to anywhere you can get it and trust me, this book will have an impact on your life. I want to thank you that out of all your busy commitments and everything you're doing that you would come.

Kathie: I was excited that you had extended an invitation. We've known each other a long, long time. But we haven't had the blessing of being together much.

Sheila: No! So this was a joy. Kathie is actually going to come back and we're going to do a show with her and Nicole C. Mullen, the wonderful one, talking about one of these movies. You don't want to miss it. Kathie Lee, love you sister! Thank you!

Kathie: Oh dear! Save the book!

Sheila: See you next time!

Kathie: Save hers too!

[Laughter]