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Week 29: Summer WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Jaime Torres

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me. As always, good to have you.

Sheila: Thank you.

Randy: Our guest today, it is one of the stories that is just...

Sheila: Amazing!

Randy: The name of his book is called *You Can't Kill the Miracle*. You'll understand. You'll get that here in a minute. But the subtitle says, "I didn't know Him, (capital H) but He knew me." Sheila, that's the amazing story we're about to hear. Would you welcome to *LIFE Today* Jaime Torres? How are you doing, brother?

Jamie: Good. Thank you, sir. How are you doing, ma'am?

Sheila: I'm doing great! I like your jacket. It is snazzy!

Randy: You've never said that to me.

Sheila: No, I never have.

Randy: In all the shows we've done together she's never said that to me.

Sheila: No, I haven't.

Randy: That's okay. So "I didn't know Him, but He knew me." You've got to tell people how bad you were, excuse me for saying it that way, but you've got to tell people the depths of where God has brought you. Because when I look at you, man, I see the sweetest, nicest guy with the love of Jesus shining on him. I'd have never believed that you should still be in prison in a lot of ways; right?

Jaime: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Randy: Tell us a little bit about your story.

Jaime: Well, many, many years in my life I lived angry. Not only angry but I felt like crap, to be honest with you. Didn't find no purpose in my life. I felt like I was dealt some cards and it was unfair.

Randy: What were those cards? You were born in...

Jaime: I was born in Puerto Rico.

Randy: Your mother was white; is that right? She was Puerto Rican.

Jaime: She is Puerto Rican but light-skinned, your complexion, and my dad was dark-skinned, black Puerto Rican. When she got pregnant, he deceived my mom. He was already married and had a family. It was a little town, so my mother was humiliated. She, in her pain, she ran, and she took me with her. Now we're talking about a little country town in Puerto Rico, and before you know it, we're in New York City in the South Bronx.

Randy: And you had other siblings by then or did that come later?

Jaime: No. That came later. It was just me and her but there was a culture shock because she don't know English, she don't know the culture, she is just running. So, we ended up in New York. And later on, she met my stepdad. So, we was raised in the South Bronx in poverty and dysfunction.

I never fit in. I never fit in. Later on, she gave birth to my four wonderful brothers but they're all light-skinned, they don't look like me.

Randy: So, you always felt...

Jaime: I always felt like an outcast. Like I really... In the beginning not so but when they used to have parties, drinking binges, the kids from the hood would come by. It is amazing when people are drinking, people invite themselves in.

[Laughter]

And so the kids, one particular young kid would be laughing hard. He would laugh so hard I'd be laughing with him not knowing that he was laughing at me. Then one day he asked me, he said, "How can these be your brothers when they are white, and you are black?" That awoke something in me.

Because I don't know if you've ever been in a situation where you've been in a school in a classroom and the teacher drew up a board, a problem on the board and then she'll ask you out of the blue, "Jaime, can you answer that?" And you don't have no idea and all the eyes looking at you, you feel stupid.

Sheila: What made your mom decide to send you back to Puerto Rico to stay with your dad?

Jaime: I joined a gang and she was worried that I was going to get killed. So, she didn't

send me to my dad, she sent me to her mama. But my dad was living in Puerto Rico. So, I got acquainted with him when I was 14 years old.

Sheila: How did that impact your life?

Jaime: Well, in the beginning when I met him, I finally felt like I was a part of something. Like wow! But that soon came to an end. He was a drug dealer. The next thing I know I was running drugs. And as a young boy you feel... That's why for many years I don't trust people. I thought when they were nice they wanted something. So, I lived the life of crime in Puerto Rico. I was devastated. I was young, 15 years old, and I got stabbed. I hooked up with a young girl and we had our first daughter. I was 15 years old.

Sheila: Just a baby!

Jaime: Just a baby. And they were going to kill me. I was going to die on those streets in Puerto Rico. So, my mom told me to come back home and so I decided to come back home. The cycle continued because I hated myself. I felt that the reason that this happened to me was because I was the problem.

Sheila: How did you end up with six bullet wounds in your chest?

Jaime: Yes. When you go about doing evil, then evil is going to come sooner or later. It is like planting a banana tree. If you plant bananas, don't expect apples. You reap what you sow. But anyway, I was doing so much evil so one day they set up a trap for me and I got shot six times in my chest.

Randy: Who is they? A rival gang?

Jaime: No! It was friends and family members that just had it in for me. Yes. On my -- by this time I was married so it was her family.

Randy: Oh! The in-laws! Wow! Okay. We can't go through all the details like you do in the book but you end back in New York City and now you're not just using, you're running drugs.

Jaime: Running drugs, yes.

Randy: What are you bringing in, and how much are you moving, and what kind of impact does that have on you?

Jaime: Well, I was going all the way to the Bahamas. I would go to the Bahamas and supervise the load that would come in. I was no -- I was not the big shot but I was doing pretty good -- pretty good.

Randy: The load is coming in from where? Columbia?

Jaime: Columbia, yes. And they were dropping it on a little island named Eleuthera in the Bahamas. And so, I would go and wait, and they would hide the drugs in the bushes until they come and pick them up in speed boats from Miami. And I was dealing with a bunch of Columbians and Cubans at that time. So, for a whole year and a half, the F.B.I. was doing an investigation that I was not aware of.

Randy: So, the F.B.I. was watching you and that's how you eventually got busted.

Jaime: Exactly.

Randy: What happened?

Jaime: Well, they came on December 1990 and they raided the house and they took me. It was on a Friday and I felt like I was going to get out that Monday. But when I went in front of the judge, he denied my bond because I was a three-time loser. I'd been in prison

in and out my whole life, so they used my background.

Randy: So, what was your sentence at the end of the day?

Jaime: So, I went to trial, lost, and from a life sentence they gave me 25 years, that's 294 months federal time, which is you don't get no good time.

Sheila: Oh, my gosh!

Jaime: You do 85% of your time.

Randy: So, you go to prison. What year was this?

Jaime: 1990.

Randy: 1990. So 1990 you get busted, you go to prison because you're running drugs, you've been in and out of trouble, you felt out of place, you felt like crap as you said a lot of your life, and you're in prison now. What happened to you in prison that changed you?

Jaime: Well, there was a young man there. He was an inmate and I felt like he was... every time we would lock eyes, like if I would go to the microwave or to the phone, I would look up and I would see him looking at me, he would smile.

Randy: Oh, that's not good in prison.

Jaime: Yes, sir. So, I felt he was making one of those crazy moves.

Randy: Oh no!

Jaime: I said not me! So, I plotted. I wanted to kill him. I saw myself, envisioned myself doing him harm.

Then one day I had a friend of mine saw me real agitated and I shared what I was going to do. When I pointed out he said, "Not him!"

I said, "What you mean?"

He said, "No, he's cool."

I said, "No. He keep showing me his teethes."

Then he said, "No. He's not that kind. I go to visit; I know his fiancée."

I said, "Well, he's too happy!"

He indicated that he was a Christian. That's the first time I hear "Christian." I thought it was talking about a gang or something.

He said, "No. He won't hurt a fly. He's just religious."

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I said, "Why is he so happy?" Then I thought he's probably going to go home early; he was going home soon. That's why he's happy. But he was sentenced to 25 years and that's what really shook me to the core because I see him every day. He was consistent. He had a swag about him. He had a peace about him that I longed for. Really, he had something that I wanted I just didn't know how to go get it.

Sheila: So, happened? Did you talk to him? Did he talk to you?

Jaime: Slowly, I let him come in my circle. I thought it was an angle. I wouldn't mistreat him. Yes, I challenged him. I challenged his manhood. He would -- but never -- he would walk away. Two or three hours later he would bring me a soup in prison. Nobody -- nobody ever -- I mean you can tell he didn't want nothing from me, but

he was real in his conviction.

Then one day he invited me to Bible study. I went and I started crying uncontrollably. There was a preacher speaking and everything he was saying I thought that my cell was bugged because how in the world he know what I was going through? I felt an urge to cry but it was a different kind of cry. And I ran out of the chapel, the little chapel in prison and ran into my cell. Then I didn't even know how to pray. All I said was, "God, if you're real, give me what Gene Larson has. Give me what he has." And I went to sleep.

When I woke up all I wanted to do was find Gene Larson. I ran and I found him at the chow line, and I told him what had happened. Big old tears came down. Now you've got to understand we're in the middle of a compound in prison and you've got one man that is crying and -- you know?

He asked me, "Do you want this peace forever, Jaime?"

I said, "Yes, sir!"

He had a little book always, and he opened it up, cracked it open, took it to Romans and then he shared the gospel, the plan of salvation. I surrendered to the Lord.

Randy: What did that do for you? For all the stuff inside, all your past?

Jaime: I just felt a weight off of me. But the greatest thing, I just felt a peace and I felt for the first time loved. That's why the book, *You Can't Kill the Miracle* because a lot of times we buy into a bunch of lies from the enemy that God has it in for us and that we're nothing and that we're dealt these cards. When in all actuality the reason we become attacked is because we have a treasure -- we are his treasure! It's because we are special. So, when you are special then you have an enemy that is going to try and break in and destroy your life so you won't go into your destiny.

Sheila: Are you able now to go into prisons, Jaime and talk to other prisoners?

Jaime: Yes, I go to many prisons. That's what I love to do.

Randy: How did you get out of prison? Because you didn't serve 25 years.

Jaime: No. The Lord blessed me. Three Jewish lawyers out of Miami, out of hundreds and hundreds of cases, they chose my case to do pro bono, free. And for seven years they challenged, they lived in 2nd Court of Appeals in Atlanta and they wrote motions while I was doing time.

I thank God for my prison experience. Really, I was in the belly of the beast and that was the best place because God was able to deal with my heart and he was able to reveal himself to me personally, intimate.

Sheila: Seven years, Jaime, they're working on your case for seven years. Did you think the minute they started working on it that perhaps you would get out sooner and it took a long time? What did that do to your faith?

Jaime: Well, that's a beautiful question because when I got found guilty, I was a baby in the Lord and I felt like the Lord let me down. Because I felt like now that I'm serving you, surely you're going to -- but I thank God he didn't because I wasn't ready. And so, when I was shackled in the bus, I felt this in my spirit says, "Don't receive that sentence in your spirit man."

So, I said back to God, I'm talking back and forth. I said, "The judge just gave me this time. What do you want me to do lie about it when they ask?" It was a big drug case.

He said, "You tell them that I have the last word."

And I hold on to that. That's what kept me there many days, many months, many years I

spent that I wanted to give up but that word that he gave me, "I have the last word." He called me. I used to tell the Lord, when I get out, I'm going to do this.

One day he stopped me. He said, "No. You're going to do it here. You're going to do it here. You're going to start Bible studies here. You're going to pray here."

So I was a missionary in prison and the Lord used the prison system to move me from different prisons and I would start Bible studies and then leave somebody in charge and move. Amen!

Sheila: That's beautiful! Absolutely beautiful! What do you see God doing now when you go in and share your story? Because if I went into prison and talked, they would think, nice for you, little Scottish lady. But you've been there. You're a hardened criminal. You had a terrible sentence. When they hear you speak about the love of God, what do you see the Lord do through your life?

Jaime: Well, that's a powerful question because I want to -- I went from slinging dope to slinging hope.

Sheila: Woo-hoo! That will preach!

Jaime: And so, I thank God that I was able to go through this process; do you understand? God will trust us. He is looking to us. He wants to trust us with the pain. And the reason why is because he will never let our pain go to waste. All that I went through today are helping and equipping people to get out of that hole. They can relate to me. I bring -- I'm able to change the atmosphere. Do you feel me? I'm able to go in there and say, what's up? Yeah, you're going through this thing here but if you hold on, you'll see that you're going to come out and you'll be able to impact lives. Why? Because you'll point people to the hope of glory, which is Jesus.

So, like me being here today, I slept none last night because I've been overwhelmed

that -- when I got shot six times in my chest and got my throat cut, God refused to let the devil whisk me away to hell. He refused! And the reason why is because I'm a ministry man, I'm a man of purpose. He knew before the foundations of the world that I was going to be here with Randy and you. We're going to be right here. He preserved me not for me, but for folk.

Sheila: It's beautiful!

Randy: When you were a child, you looked at yourself as an outcast. As a teenager you were looked at as someone that should be in juvie. As an adult you were looked at as a drug dealer, an inmate. But God looked at you differently. How does God see Jaime Torres?

Jaime: I'm his prized possession. I'm his son. You see that's one of the tricks. He's got many tricks, the enemy does. He's got a toolbox. One of them is he tries to steal our identity. You see? From my mama's womb I went immediately to being a bastard. You see? And then from bastard, right, to inmate, to a number. Do you see how he constantly -- he don't want me and you to know who we are in Christ Jesus, what we possess. Amen? Do you see what I'm saying? So I'm so glad that he revealed himself as my papa -- Abba!

James: Don't you love his testimony?

Sheila: It's beautiful!

Randy: God loves us. He created you for a reason, he created Jaime for a reason. He's got a reason and a purpose for all of us.

And that's why I get excited when I see how we, as an organization, as viewers, as supporters, can reach out to others and say, "You're valuable." Let me show you some that God looks down and sees as his own, that we need to reach out and just remind them

who they are. Watch this.

On the mission field:

Randy: Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. It's a tenet of our faith. But as a believer, I can tell you I view my hope with a new perspective when I encounter people who have lost what they hold sacred, their children.

I want you to understand something about the people here. They tend to have quite a few children, up to seven in some of the families in some of these villages we've seen, and they typically will not all grow into adulthood. They will lose them and they're losing them the same way.

One of the most profound lessons I've learned from my parents is that we are blessed to be a blessing. At *LIFE Today*, we find people around the world in desperate need of a blessing. Many of them lack one of life's most basic needs.

To you and me this is just dirty water. But to countless people around the world this is the only source of water -- the only thing they have to drink. And for far too many, this is death.

Life and death, it could not be simpler. Our hope in Christ challenges us to fight for life and in this case our path is clear.

This water is clean. It's drinkable. It's beautiful. It's nothing like the water we've seen around the world in places where children, especially, are dying of waterborne diseases. When you give this clean, pure water you give them a chance at life. Let's give Water for LIFE.

End of video

In the studio:

Randy: It really is a matter of life and death, but it really is easy to give life. Sheila, I know you've been around the world like I have and you've seen these places. It is hard to watch the way they're living. It just feels like we have to do something.

Sheila: And that's the great news. We can do something. If you know my story, you know that I've struggled with depression. But you know what I've discovered helps me almost more than anything? It's getting involved in somebody else's life and helping somebody else.

If you take the word *depression* and you rearrange the letters, do you know what you get? I pressed on. There is some of you right now and you're thinking well, I'd love to help somebody else but I'm not in a great way. Can I tell you there is something beautiful about the way that God has designed you and me that when we decide to reach out and help somebody else touch somebody else's life you suddenly catch your own reflection and discover you're smiling? There is nothing more beautiful than giving back.

And the great news is we can make a difference. I've been in the villages where there is no water well and I've watched the mothers grieve at the graves of their babies that they've buried. And I've been to the villages where we've been able to put in a well that lasts usually for 70 years. They don't even need electricity. There's a pump that will go for 70 years and serve like a thousand people in the village.

Now if you and I determine we're all going to do our bit, we literally can change the world for some people. And it is very doable, Randy.

Randy: Absolutely! The breakdown if you look at the 400 wells we want to do this year, we've already done, in the history of *LIFE Outreach* we've drilled over 6,000 wells now but 400 this year in 15 nations, average cost of a well is \$4,800. It lasts a lifetime for

most of these people. So if you look at sort of the mathematical breakdown you realize that \$48 will give clean drinking water for a lifetime to ten people. \$72 will serve 15 people. \$144 will serve 30 people. That's gives you an idea of how a little bit can go a long, long way.

I hope that you'll give -- if you can give a well, if you can give two wells, do what you can. The significant part is not so much the amount. The widow's mite means more to Jesus because it is the obedience. It is standing up and saying, "You know what? I'm going to be an example of Christ's love to someone around the world. I'm going to obey. I'm going to give out of whatever I have. I'm going to give out of a heart that just says I want to express the love of Christ to someone." We do it through water. It's a beautiful example of Christ who is our water of life.

So will you join us in Water for LIFE? Go to the phones, go online, just be a part of this. You can be a part of something so good. Do it today.

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 else can she 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 400 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will provided for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift, we'll send you the "New Mercies Each Day" desk calendar. This 17-month calendar will not only help you keep track of important dates but also remind you of the Father's love and goodness with scripture quotes and encouragement from all the hosts on *LIFE Today*.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "Fruit of the Spirit" bowl. This beautiful and decorative ceramic bowl features scripture revealing the "Fruit of the Spirit," a lovely addition to your table or home.

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 our "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much. Let's make a difference in Jesus' name.

Randy: That's right! Let me tell you, if you're interested in our guest and his book or in having Jaime Torres come to your church, to a prison, to whatever ministry you've got, check out his website. It's JaimeTorresMinistries.com. And you can be blessed just like we've been blessed.

Have you enjoyed Jaime? Bless you, man! Thank you so much for being here. It's

wonderful to see what God's doing in your life.

Jaime: Thank you.

Randy: Join us again at *LIFE Today*.