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Week 42: Mission: Rescue Life

Sheila Walsh

"All in"

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh and I'm so glad that you stopped by. I was talking to a friend the other day who said that he is really discouraged. He pastors a small church and he's noticed that a lot of younger couples are kind of falling away. He said he still has the senior members who are very faithful and who still show up for everything, but he said there seems to be a kind of loss of interest in what it means to be a believer, what it means to be fully committed.

It's been on my heart so much and that's what I really want us to talk about today. What does it mean as a Christian to be all in? Because the more I think about it, the more I think, either everything that Jesus said is true, and if it's true then we should be in 100 percent, 24/7, on mission, or it's not and then we should just walk away and find something else to give our lives to. But for me, the longer I've walked with Christ, the more I've understood the beauty of having God as my father, the more that I want this stage and age to be all in.

I was looking through -- I had a long flight recently so I was just reading through the gospels and into some of Paul's letters. I stopped on this one story which I know this story. I've heard it since I was a wee girl growing up in Scotland. But I think there is something in that that speaks to the questions that are on my mind at the moment. So let me just read this passage to you. You're probably familiar with it. We kind of refer to it as "The story of the rich young ruler" but here's what it says:

Someone came to Jesus with this question: "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have

eternal life?"

"Why ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only one who is good. But to answer your question -- if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments."

"Well, which ones?" the man asked.

And Jesus replied, "You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself."

"I've obeyed all these commandments," the young man replied. "What else must I do?"

Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

But when the young man heard this, he went away sad for he had many possessions.

If you want to read that for yourself you'll find that story in Matthew Chapter 19.

Well, I remember reading this passage when I was a young girl, I was probably 13 or 14 and I was so convicted by it. So what I did was I took all my earthly possessions, which were not much back then, one of my favorite authors was a British writer called Enid Blyton, and I had all the books. There was a series called *The Famous Five* and *The Secret Seven*. So I put all of those into a little suitcase and little bits of jewelry I had, anything I thought would be worth something. So I took all my stuff to school the next day in this little suitcase. And at lunchtime I sold everything to my friends so that I could give the money to the poor.

Well, my mum at that point was very involved with the Baptist Missionary Society so I just presented this to my mom and said, "I've sold everything I have and I want you to

give it to the poor."

Well, in retrospect I'm not sure I quite understood the passage the way that Christ intended us to read it and what he was actually saying to this man. It wasn't that this young man had money, it was really that the money had him. It was how much he loved it and valued it above everything else.

Christ, one of the most amazing things about our Lord, he can see right into our hearts. He knows us better than we know ourselves. And when he looked at this young man, he knew that the love of money was going to be his downfall.

But my question in this is what does it mean to be "all in" as a believer? What does that actually look like? Well, I want us to look at a passage in Matthew 17 that might give us a glimpse. I was studying this recently and I read it differently than I've ever read it before. It's the story that we refer to as "The Transfiguration" or when Christ was transformed on the mountaintop. So let me read it. I actually have, I'm going to read it in one gospel and then, an extra little part that Mark included in his gospel, and I'm only going to read you that because it is funny and it is so human.

But first of all let's look at this one: Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brother, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shown like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.

Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus. Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I'll make three shelters as a memorials -- one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

But even as he spoke, a bright cloud over shadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him."

The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground. Then Jesus came over and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus. As they went back down the mountain Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Well, that rendering is from Matthew Chapter 17. You can read it in verses 1-9. But here's one of my questions. Why was it just Peter, James, and John that went? Why would it not have been all 12 of the disciples?

I was recently speaking at a pastor's retreat with my dear friend, Phil Waldrep. We were talking about this passage and he suggested perhaps they were the only ones who were willing to go. Try and imagine this scenario. Jesus says, "I'm going up the mountain. Who wants to come with me?"

And I'm wondering some of them are like, "Well, I'd love to, Lord but I need a nap."

Or, "I have chores to do for my mom. I'll catch you later."

But Peter, James, and John were all in, fully committed. And it made me wonder if that's why on the darkest night in the life of Christ it was these three men that he took with him further into Garden of Gethsemane.

Christ must have seen something in these three. Remember, he can look right into our hearts and see what's going on? He chose the 12. He loved the 12. But what was it Jesus saw when he looked into the hearts, into the eyes of Peter, James, and John? So these three men went with Christ up into the high mountain and they saw -- I can't imagine what that was like -- they saw Christ transfigured, transformed before them. His face shining like the sun, speaking with Moses, representing the law, and Elijah, representing the prophets.

Now let me ask you a question. How did they know that it was Moses and Elijah? There was no Facebook then. No Instagram. They couldn't look up Moses profile to see what he looked like now. No. The spirit must have revealed to them who was standing there on that high mountain with Christ.

I told you in Mark's gospel he gives a funny and I think very human detail that Matthew omits. This is just a tiny couple of verses. Peter exclaimed, "Rabbi, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters as memorials -- one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He said this because he really didn't know what else to say for they were all terrified.

I think that's hilarious. Can you imagine what it must have been like in those days to walk with Christ? Every single day something new happened. He could make fish appear where there had been no fish. He could touch the eyes of someone who was blind and suddenly they could see. So many amazing miracles!

But then, suddenly, they have this incredible privilege of seeing Christ for the first time transformed. As they watched, suddenly there is Moses and Elijah. These men are brought up in the temple. They know all the stories of what kind of man Moses was and that God himself took Moses' bones and buried them. How personal can God get? And Elijah, taken up in a chariot and they got to see it. Well, after they are privileged to be part of this holy moment, Jesus said this to them, "Don't tell anyone what you've seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Don't tell anyone? Until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead? We take all that for granted now. But this is way before the crucifixion and the resurrection. I found myself wondering, what was it like for them when they went back down, and they meet up later with the other disciples. Can you imagine? They're like, "Hey guys! How did it go up the mountain?"

"It was good! Yep! It was really good. You're going to wish you came but we can't tell

you until a lot later."

Well, they didn't tell. The scriptures tells us that but I'm sure Peter, James, and John must have had many conversations among themselves about what was really happening there. And what did Jesus mean when he said, "After the Son of Man has been raised from the dead"?

But you know what I take from that? There are great adventures in Christ waiting for those who will say, I'm all in.

Sitting on a fence is kind of uncomfortable. I don't know if you've ever tried it. It used to be that -- the home that my family lived in in Scotland, my brother loved to play soccer and his friend, Gary from next door would come over and play soccer. And my role was to get their soccer ball back when it landed over the fence over on the other family because they had a boxer dog and both boys were scared of this dog and I wasn't. So I was the one that always had to clamber up onto the fence and get over and get their soccer ball back.

Let me be honest, sitting on a fence is very uncomfortable and I think that's true in our faith. We're living in difficult days. I don't know if you sense it in your spirit, whether you're watching television or watching the news or even out in our culture, on social media, things are shifting in the spiritual realm. You can feel greater darkness. But these are days for you and to decide that we're all in. Because think about it. If what you believe in here is true that should radically impact how we live every single day of our lives.

Maybe you think, well, you know what? I'm a little behind the curve here because for years I've really not been all in. Let me tell you something that might be an encouragement to you. Even Christ's own family weren't all in until he had been raised from the dead.

We read, scripture says: One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather again. Soon he and his disciples couldn't even find time to eat.

And then we read this in Mark three: When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. "He is out of his mind," they said.

That's what Christ's brothers and sisters said, "He's out of his mind."

John records for us just in a simple straightforward sentence, John seven, verse five: Even his brothers didn't believe in him. All of that changed when Jesus rose from the dead.

I don't know how familiar you are with the book of James but if you've read it recently do you realize that James was Jesus' little brother? Can you imagine what it must have been like to have Jesus as your big brother? I mean never did anything wrong. Never messed up. Did everything perfect at the temple. Honored his father, honored his mother. And then you come along, and it's like, how do you measure up to Jesus when he's your big brother?

When James wrote his letter it was during a time of extreme persecution for believers. A time when it cost you dearly to be all in. And a lot of the Jewish people had been scattered all around the world. So he's writing to those people. But what I want you to hear is how he begins his letter, just the very first verse, James 1:1. He says, this letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word used for *slave* here is the Greek word *doulos*, d-o-u-l-o-s, and it means slave or bondservant. I don't know if you're familiar with the idea of a bondservant. A bondservant was someone who had been given his freedom but chose to stay. It was like say you had 20 years of indentured service but you've done your time and now your boss says, "Thank you! You're free to go." But a bondservant was someone whose price had been paid, he was free, but he chose to stay.

James knew that his big brother had paid his debt and he was free. But now he gladly made himself a slave, a bondservant to the one who was not just his earthly brother but the Lord Jesus Christ.

I heard a story of this boy in Scotland, it is way up in the north, way up in the Hebrides Islands and he was kind of a local troublemaker. They knew that if anything was broken into, if a bike went missing or something, they knew it was Jimmy who had done it.

Well, one night Jimmy showed up at the Sunday evening service in the small church. Now what he didn't know was that for a couple of weeks the elders had been saying to the pastor, "You know, we really need to pray for some conversions. We haven't seen anyone come to Christ recently." Well, on that Sunday night Jimmy came in the back of the church thinking that he would be able to take whatever had been gathered in the offering plate and disappear before they sang the last hymn. But God was in that place and "Wee Jimmy" as they all called him was drawn to sit actually in the back pew. And that night Christ looked right into Jimmy's heart and told him, "I love you." And that night Jimmy gave his life to Jesus.

Well, three weeks later Jimmy is back in church and it is the morning service. The deacons are passing the offering plates and Jimmy is sitting right on the end of a pew. When the deacon came to him with the offering plate Jimmy said, "Would you put it on the floor?"

And the deacon said, "No, son. Just pass it along the row."

He said, "No. Please, would you just put it on the floor?"

And the deacon said, "Jimmy, it doesn't matter if you don't have any money. Just pass it along."

But Jimmy persisted, "Please! Would you just put it on the floor?" So the deacon put the offering plate on the floor and Wee Jimmy stepped in and said, "Lord, I'm all in. I don't have a lot but I'm all in until it is all over."

That's all I want to ask you. What about if you and I make a decision that we are going to be all in for Jesus because he's worth it. Because every word in this book is true and it's life and it will change you forever. I don't care if you're 10 or 98, if you've got a pulse, if there is not a white chalk mark around your body it is not too late to say, "I am all in." And when you're all in, it changes how you see other people as well. I'll tell you what I mean about that but first of all, would you watch this?

On the mission field:

[Clock ticking]

Kirie: What can you do in 30 seconds? Go fix yourself a cup of coffee? Go answer the door? In 30 seconds a child can walk past one border into another where they may never return.

Open Captions:

>> My father was very abusive to my mother. She couldn't live like that. When I was six, she doused herself with kerosene and burned herself to death. When I was 11, my father started abusing me too. My grandmother didn't believe me. My father told me that no one would ever believe me, and he wouldn't stop. [Crying]

Kirie: Because of her emptiness and desperation she was willing to listen to a man that she'd never met who promised her a better life.

Open Captions:

>> I took a bus to the border. The man said he would wait for me on the other side, and he gave me a fake story to use if I was questioned.

Kirie: Thankfully, our mission partners were on that border with their monitors watching every child, every girl that comes through and as Sweta began to tell her story, they began to ask her questions. When she answered them, they realized she was in harm's way; 30 seconds away from being taken a prisoner. We don't have much time to stop this. We need you to act now so those 30 seconds are seconds for good.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: What a story! Can you imagine our darling friend, Kirie James there at that border literally watching as children are snatched from the very gates of hell? Thirty seconds that can change a life.

That's our passion here at *LIFE Outreach*. Can you -- I can't even conceive of what it is like as a mother to be so desperate, to have lost all hope that you douse yourself with kerosene and set fire to yourself? That is the epitome of despair. And then for that darling girl that nobody believed her, nobody believed her story but you know what? We believe her and we believe the other girls that are out there.

And that's why our mission here at *LIFE Outreach*, it's like we listen to our partners on the ground, we go ourselves, we watch what's happening, we learn and it's really a three stage process: Reach, rescue, and restore. Reach is the way we actually go into villages before a young girl like that is 30 seconds away from the gates of hell and we educate. We say if a man comes up to you and says this... if he gives you this kind of story, run for your life. Scream as loudly as you can. So that is preventive.

Then rescue is when our teams actually find out where these girls are being held and in midnight raids, they go in and they literally snatch these girls back.

And then the restore part is where we can bring them to a place where they can learn that

they have value. I asked one of the pastors that we work with in Phnom Penh in Cambodia, "What do you have to say to a girl?"

He said, "You need to help her understand she is worth more than a chicken." Because she is sold for less than you would sell a chicken.

So we want to bring these girls to a place where they can learn a new craft, learn a trade, have their souls restored. The way we can do that is we have an amazing gift from some of our friends at the moment. They have put up \$320,000 as a matching gift. It used to be that \$128 is how we start a process of reaching, of rescuing and beginning to restore. But now because of this matching gift, if you're able to give \$64 they will match that and be given this process of the life of one girl. And previously, if you've been able to give \$128 that would have begun the process of reaching, rescuing, and restoring a girl. Now it will be matched and it will be two girls. \$1280 matched now will rescue 20.

These girls are crying out for someone to believe them and we want to say in Jesus' name, we see you, we believe you. So please, will you go to your phone? Will you give the very best gift possible? And let's rescue, let's snatch these girls from the gates of hell and say, "Jesus says you are worth being saved." Please do it. Thank you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Behind the bright lights there's 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 faith, hope, love tea towel set. These beautifully woven hand towels are a wonderful reminder to remain steadfast in faith, hope, and love each day.

With your gift of \$128 or more you'll receive the life-giving Proverbs journal bound in genuine leather. This journal is filled with wisdom and daily encouragement from Proverbs, featuring lined pages for your personal notes as you reflect on godly instruction to success in life.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,280 which will now help rescue 20 children! And you may request our beautiful bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

On the mission field:

Sheila: What I've seen here is the abject poverty that people are living in. So many young girls are forced into prostitution, they are trafficked because they're desperate. There is no money in the family. So often the father is a drunk. There is debt and the only job they can get is at the mercy of a sex trafficker.

Will you go to your phone? Will you go online? Will you call that number and make the best gift possible so that we can reach, we can rescue, we can restore? Would you do it now?

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you. Please keep calling. This is what Suetta looked like two weeks later. Beginning the process of being restored. This works! We would not share this with you if we hadn't seen with our own eyes that we can do this.

So please, if you tried to call earlier and the phone line was busy, please keep calling. You don't have to know a lot of the Word of God to know that God's heart is for those who are being held captive. And the fact that we can actually go in and work with our amazing partners on the ground and snatch these girls and drag them into the glory of the presence of Christ, this makes it worth getting up everything single day.

So I'm Sheila Walsh. So for all of us here at *LIFE Today*, see you next time!