

12/11/19

Week 50: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

"When Your Heart is Overwhelmed"

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

One of my favorite things to do every morning now is to pray a Psalm out loud. I really believe that God gave the Psalms to the people of God so the people of God can pray the Psalms back to God. If you're in a great place, if you're in a hard place you will find a Psalm that matches your emotions.

One of my favorite first couple of verses is this: Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to you when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

That's Psalms 61 and I love that! "When my heart is overwhelmed." Have you ever felt overwhelmed? Well, I'm guessing if you're lived more than ten minutes then the answer is probably yes. I don't think we've ever had a time in our nation when people are as overwhelmed as they are today.

I'm thinking too, if you're a mom and you have school age children, there's so much going on in their lives these days. I remember when Christian was a little boy, he had a habit of letting me know that school projects were due like the night before. I'm sure he was sent home with a note but I have no idea where it went. I can think of many a night I'd been up at 10:00 baking cookies for the following day. Or one of the worst was he had signed me up for the teacher appreciation thanksgiving lunch and he'd ticked the box

to say that I would bring the turkey. Yeah! I was the turkey cooking at 3:00 in the morning.

But I think the worst one ever was in the 6th grade when we learned that his class project was due in two days. And it was a "to scale" version of the tabernacle of the Lord with the sacrificial lambs, the priests, the lampstands. I just remember us running up and down the aisles in Hobby Lobby looking for sheep and priests.

But in reality, our kids are overcommitted with sports and school and video games and social media. I'm thinking about your life, so often we are overcommitted with work or with being a mom, with church; trying to be everything for everybody. I think of our dads, our husband, our sons are stressed out. It is overwhelming.

What do you think some of the main stressors in your life are? It could be things -- I think one of the greatest ones like financial trouble where your bills are greater than your income, that's incredibly overwhelming and stressful. It can be health issues that are overwhelming. But not only that, I had a note from a woman on my Facebook page last night and she said, "I'm facing double burden because this serious illness has brought a huge financial burden with it." Her insurance isn't covering what she has to have done. I'm thinking, Lord, give this woman your grace and mercy. Not only does she feel ill but she has this worry as well.

One of the hardest things I think is when we have a child who walks away from their faith.

Well, I posted that verse Psalm 62, verses one and two, I posted it on my Facebook page a couple nights ago, Sheila Walsh Connects, and I asked women, "What are some of the things that are overwhelming to you right at this moment?" In the next couple of hours over 2,000 women joined the conversation. I love when you do that!

So I printed out just a few of them. One said, "I need a miracle in my health as soon as

possible. I have cancer in my left lung." Another one said, "I need prayers for my wayward son. Addiction is stripping him of everything." What a sorrow that has to be! And then this one. It kind of made me smile but I totally understood it. She said, "My job overwhelms me. I'm so scared I'll make a mistake and get fired that I'm actually making a lot of mistakes." Someone else wrote, "Sheila, I just lost my job. I've got lots of bills, health issues, I'm divorced, and I have no help." And this one just broke my heart, "The grief of losing my 20-year old son to suicide two years ago. Trying to find my new self in such grief and tragedy is very overwhelming." And then one I related to, I was there with my own mom: "Watching my 96-year old mother with Alzheimer's dying ever so slowly for the past five weeks. This is the most gut-wrenching thing I've ever had to do."

Think about it, that's just a few women who follow me on my Facebook page. It's heartbreaking. So I turn again to David's heart cry, "Hear my cry, O God. Attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to you when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Whatever you are dealing with right now David has three requests of God in these first two verses of Psalm 61. These three requests model for us what to do when we're absolutely overwhelmed.

His first request is this: Number one, Lord hear me. Hear my cry, O God. Attend to my prayer.

The Hebrew word used here for cry, *zeaqah*, typically refers to a prayer of lament. It is a kind of piercing cry when you are in real pain.

So what was happening in David's life when he wrote this? This was a heartbreaking time in his life. He's almost 70 years old by this point. His son Absalom whom he loved had led a rebellion against him. David, the king had to actually leave Jerusalem. Then Absalom had publicly humiliated his father and now this beloved son had been killed. I don't think there is anything more painful to a mom or a dad than when something

happens to your child. So David's cry was primal, full of pain. And what made it worse was that David knew that his sinful choices in the past, it was almost like it had set all of this in motion. Very hard when you see bad choices in your own life play out in the lives of your children.

I have a very dear friend who had an affair that led to a divorce and a divided family. When one of our children rebelled, she felt that it was her fault. I thought, only God knows that. But boy do we have an enemy who loves to use that stuff to torment us. Guilt is such a weight to carry. I mean, I can think of so many things that we all deal with that can feel absolutely overwhelming.

About four years ago, just before James and Betty invited me to be part of this ministry, I found myself in a place like that. It really felt as if my life was over. It was a busy, busy day. I had just gone to the grocery store and was bringing all my groceries in the house and I turned to put the things in the freezer, and it felt like somebody had stabbed me in the back. I thought, wow! What was that? It was very painful. But I just paused for a moment and the pain kind of shifted. But it happened again and then it happened again.

And it began to get worse and worse with each day. And on some days, I could hardly get out of bed. The pain from my back shot all the way down my left leg. I had actually met with James and Betty for lunch and they had asked me, would I come and stand beside them in this amazing ministry and I wanted to do that with all my heart. But I actually felt as if a door was being slammed in my face.

It got worse and worse, and eventually I was sent to a pain specialist whose name, if you can believe it, was called Jerry Lewis. Nothing worked. I got cortisone shots, all sorts of things but I could hardly walk. It felt as if the life that I knew had come to an end. It felt absolutely overwhelming. Good things seemed to be happening, it seemed like God had thrown open this door to be part of this phenomenal ministry and then slam! I could hardly get out of bed.

Have you ever felt that way? Like good things are opening up and then it feels like a door has been slammed in your face and you're left alone in the corridor? What do you do when you are honestly overwhelmed? When it almost takes your breath away?

I spent the first probably 30 years of my life as a Christian saying what I thought was the right thing to say. I pushed the pain of my childhood down deep but when my life fell apart and I ended up in a psych hospital it was actually going to be one of God's greatest gifts to me. What I learned then and there at the lowest point in my life helped me so much when it looked like life as I knew it was ending.

I think so often we are the least transparent in church. You would think that when we walk through church doors that's when we get to tell the truth and show up. But so often we just pretend we don't have any problems. Or perhaps we're in denial even to ourselves. But there is no help, no healing in denial. When you try to bury your problems, my friend Ruth Graham said this which I felt was a really great illustration. She said, "You've actually buried them alive."

I learned in that hospital another way. Dare to have a gut level, unedited conversation with God. God knows you and he loves you. The level that we are willing to be honest with God about our pain is an indication of how much we actually trust him. I remember laying on that hospital floor and I'd prayed some eloquent prayers in my time. I went to seminary and I had heard some phenomenal prayers but here was my actual prayer there. It was like Lord, I'm done! I can't do this anymore. I've tried so hard to be a perfect Christian and I'm just exhausted.

You know what I felt? I felt as if the Lord said, "I know, and I am here." He's just waiting to welcome us when we tell him the truth.

So when you're overwhelmed, let's cry out with David, Lord, hear me!

Well, David's second request was this: Lord, help me! Attend to my prayer from the end

of the earth I will cry to you -- from the end of the earth. Geographically David is not at the end of the earth, but it feels that way to him. You see, he's not in Jerusalem. He is away from home, away from the sanctuary, the dwelling place of God because before the death and resurrection of Christ God's presence was with his people in the Ark of the Covenant. David felt very, very far away from the presence of God. He's really at the end of his rope.

Have you ever been there? Sometimes it does feel as if God is far away when you're overwhelmed and you're struggling, God can seem very far away.

Well, when nothing helped with the pain specialist in my story, I was sent to see a neurosurgeon and after M.R.I.'s CAT scans and dye being injected into my spine, the surgeon told me he couldn't promise a good result. He said, "It may help but it may make things a lot worse. It's your call."

What I learned 20 years before on the floor of my hospital room in that psych hospital was lifesaving. So I just poured out my heart to God, what if I can't walk again? What if my whole world is now the four walls of my home? What if I'll never be pain-free again? Lord, help me! And the answer was the same every time: "I'll be there. I'll be there. I will be there." Lord help me is one of the most honest, intimate prayers that God loves to receive from his children.

Well, David's final request in this Psalm is a beautiful one: Lord, hide me! When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. What David knew is that he was frail but God is mighty. He also knew that he had failed God, but God would never fail him.

On the morning of my surgery when I'm being wheeled into the operating room, the nurse, who was walking beside me, and I couldn't see who she was. She was all masked up, but she said to me, "What are you singing?" I didn't honestly know that I was so I listened in. But I realized I was singing, "I Surrender All." I surrender all! It was because

I understood I have a rock that is higher than high.

Now as you can probably tell the surgeon under the guidance of the Lord did an incredible job but what I want you to know is this. I had God's peace in the not knowing. As I was being wheeled into surgery, a nine-hour surgery, not knowing whether I would be able to walk afterward, whether I would be pain free, whether I would be able to say yes to James and Betty and show up here and become your friend -- I didn't know that. But I had God's peace.

Now I want you to know in my own life, I still deal with clinical depression. Some days are harder than others, but I find help and strength in one name and one name alone, Jesus! Do you know the power when we just simply speak the name, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! There is power in the name of the Lord.

I don't know what might be overwhelming to you, but I love how David ends that Psalm. Let me live forever in your sanctuary, safe beneath the shelter of your wings!

My mom was a farm accountant in Scotland when I was growing up. She told me a story of a night when there was a terrible fire that destroyed a farmer's whole livelihood. His little stone cottage was still there but all the barns, all the animals, all the crops, everything was gone. And then one morning as they're walking through the devastation once the fire had finally died down, he saw this chicken. It was badly scarred and burned and the farmer just very gently with his foot moved it to one side. And there underneath were six little baby chicks still alive. That mother had spread her wings over her children and saved their lives.

You have a Father who spread his wings over you to save you. That's how much you are loved. You are covered. So even if the moment you're dealing with so much and you feel overwhelmed, find a quiet spot. Maybe you find the Lord's presence closest when you're out in nature. Go for a walk or sit quietly in your home. Or whatever it is -- but just rest in the presence of God. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Life can seem very overwhelming. It might even seem out of control, but the reality is God is on the throne. We're going to move into an election year and there's going to be all sorts of craziness and you're going to hear all sorts of people yelling at one another. That's why when we push into the presence of God we find peace there. And we remember what is true, Christ won the battle. We've read the end of the story. Jesus wins -- even if you're overwhelmed right now and you've suffered some loss right now, in the end you are covered by the wings of our beautiful savior. I think that's one of the reasons here at life that we care so much for so many people around the world who don't even know that there is one who would spread his wings over them. But the great thing is you and I get to go there and Jesus' name and let them know there is hope, there is help, there is healing and we're coming to you in Jesus' name. Watch this.

On the mission field:

Isak: We've just arrived at this malnutrition clinic. And my heart just sinks as we arrived here because this is far more mothers and children than what we're used to seeing here.

We're just at the beginning of the hungry season. You say what does that mean? Well, this is what it means. So they harvested some months ago. In the village that we were in a few days ago they were telling us how they ran out of food in the last month or two. And what that means, when I say, "ran out of food" that means they have no food. One of the mothers said, "I have no food."

Open Captions:

>> Months ago, we grew a little bit of maize. But now the food is finished, and we are hungry.

Isak: That's what I mean when I say, "the hungry season." What you're seeing here is just the beginning of the ramification of that. So many mothers lined up here, way more than normal. And children that look like this young child. You can see by just how emaciated the child is; just how thin its shoulders and arms are. You don't have to be a nutritionist to be able to say to me, I can see that that child is malnourished. Look how it just reaches out almost as if to say, "Please help me!"

That's why we have to get mission feeding out there into the villages. You see, if we get to the villages where these mothers are, if we can meet them there with mission feeding, we can solve this problem where we can guarantee life. Here we fight the battle of life and death. Out in the village with mission feeding, we guarantee life.

Please! Do whatever you can do. Partner with us to help us continue to expand mission feeding and continue mission feeding in the areas we are so that we can guard against mothers and children having to be in malnutrition clinics.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Gosh! The eyes of that little one! It's kind of ironic that on the baby's shirt it says "Silent Night." I'm sure, pretty sure in that home there are no silent nights. To have to put a child to bed who is crying, in pain because of absolute hunger, it's hard for us. I get it. It's hard for you and I to wrap our minds around what it's like to have no food. Some nights if I'm home late I'll open the fridge and I'm like, oh gosh, I don't know what I'm going to have for dinner. I didn't to get something in. But there is something around the house. Or I can get in my car and I can go to the grocery store and pick something up. For these moms when the maize is gone, it's gone! There is nothing. I've seen them try to just take the husks, with almost nothing left on and try to give their children something in their stomach. I cannot imagine the desperation of having no food.

What Isak said is so true. If we get to the villages and set up the feeding programs, then

these children and these moms will never end up in those malnutrition clinics. We have made a commitment with our partners on the ground to feed thousands of children.

Now in mission feeding we're getting toward the end of the year. If you haven't given your year-end gift yet, today would be a great day to do that; to get that tax-deductible gift in. But every one of us, even if you're a teenager watching this, we can all do something. \$30 will feed three children for three months. Where else on this earth would \$30 feed three children for three months? \$50 will feed five children. \$100...

Now if you're a family of four and you go out for a meal and you go to a movie, that \$100 is gone. Skip a movie night, skip a meal and feed ten children for three months! Some of you God has blessed in your business or your work or whatever you're doing, and for you, \$1,000 would feed 100 children for three months. Can you imagine?

Now for any gift at all, we will send you *Altared* by Anthony Evans. He has such a beautiful voice. He tells a story through this CD that I think will bless you. But it's not -- I know you don't give for the gifts but let's do something now. As we get ready to prepare for a new year, let's change the way we live. Wouldn't it be great if you and every week decided we'll skip one thing? Like I'll skip a manicure, I'll skip a movie, I'll skip something that let's face it we can definitely live without and change the lives of children who are starving? Betty said a long time ago, "It is our prayer and commitment that that line of children will never be longer than the food we have to give them." We can only do it if you and I partner together. Will you go to your phone? Will you make the best gift possible in Jesus' name?

Begin video clip

Announcer: Mission feeding began with a promise to be there in times of crisis for thousands of hurting and hungry children in their time of need.

Now more than ever we need your help to save lives by feeding and caring for children

across the continent of Africa. With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish our supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us. Your gift of love can be the miracle answer to a desperate mother's prayer.

Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50 or \$100 that will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. With your gift, we'll send you the authored worship CD by Anthony Evans. This powerful full-length album includes unique versions of some of today's most cherished worship songs that are sure to uplift and inspire you.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the "Filled with Faith" and "...Joy" travel mug set. These 12-ounce mugs are crafted with large handles, double-layered insulation and vacuum sealed lids to prevent spills. Each mug includes a message to remind you of God's blessings and faithfulness.

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 video

On the mission field:

Isak: This is their school in this local area. This is the ideal place for us to be able to establish mission feeding because we know we've got a permanent structure here where we can feed children on a daily basis.

What does that mean? That means that we solve a multitude of problems. Firstly, we save lives. We save these children's lives by bringing them mission feeding. We stop them from dying from malnutrition.

Number two: We stabilize their condition. So we stabilize them, and we allow them to be able to start to develop and to rebuild their lives.

Number three: We take away the pressure and the pain on these families, particularly on these mothers and the grandmothers who are desperately trying to find some food.

We can solve all of that just with mission feeding but we cannot do it without you. We cannot bring mission feeding here unless you partner with us, unless you join your hearts and knit your hands together with ours. And unless you do what you can do so that we can do what we have to do and that is bring mission feeding to these children.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you. If the lines are busy, please persevere. Don't give up. Don't quit! Just keep calling until you get through. And for a gift of \$100 or more, we'll send you these "Filled with Faith" or "Filled with Joy" mugs. I love this! Just lifting this to your mouth and you remember, "Filled with Faith," "Filled with Joy!" We're really careful what we send out to you because what we want is we want to bless you as you are blessing others. So please let's do this together. What a wonderful way to come to the end of a year by determining that we're going to be a blessing to other people.

So I'm Sheila Walsh. I'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*!