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Week 12: Rescue Life

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Addison Bevere

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh here with my buddy, Randy Robison.

Randy: Just having a good time.

Sheila: Yeah, we are. I'm going to say something about our guest and about his book that I don't think I've ever said on this program. But when I got hold of this book and began to read it, it had a really profound impact on me. And I really honestly believe that this is a prophetic message to the church at this time.

So I'm hugely honored to welcome Addison Bevere to the show.

Addison: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Randy: I didn't know that was coming. So I do a livecast Monday through Friday, *LIFE Today* Live I call it, online, and people can see that at our website if you follow us. I talked to you about this last week. And after that I came and said, we need to have this guy on the broadcast show because it is that good. It is that profound.

They said, what is *Saints*? This sounds really lofty. I'm like, oh, just let him explain it and it will change your life. So would you explain what you are talking about as *Saints*?

Addison: So can I be honest about something? I don't like calling myself a Christian. I know like the wind just went...

Sheila: Just going to let that sit for a little bit there.

Randy: Why?

Addison: So it's not that I'm ashamed of Jesus. I think he is the one person who got this whole humanity thing right. I love following in his footsteps. What I'm ashamed of is I'm ashamed of the labels and the stereotypes and the stigmas that have attached themselves to the idea of being a Christian. I have so many friends who have walked away from the faith. I know so many people, they don't want anything to do with "Christianity." And so I was hoping to find a fresh view of faith for a world that's losing hope in religion.

Randy: Do you think that's always fair? Yes, there's been failure in the church. Yes, Christians don't always live up to our ideals but isn't there a little bit of slander also that's gone on in the world to tarnish maybe Christians unfairly?

Addison: Absolutely. I think there is blame on every front. But for me as someone who is within, I want to look at my own life and my own journey and the story that I'm telling with my life and say, am I contributing to this narrative that Christians only live for themselves?

Sheila: So what led you to a study of what it means to be a saint?

Addison: To be a saint specifically. So I was reading this book and it was a book written in the early -- I think it was written like 1920. I was halfway through the book and the author used the word *saint* in a way that caught my attention. When I think of a saint, at least when I thought of a saint before I would think of stained-glass windows, halos, dead people, basically. And I read this and the way the author described a saint is someone who practices and participates in the mystery of the final day.

Randy: Wait, wait! Back up. Say that again.

Addison: Practices and participates in the mystery of the final day.

Randy: What is that?

Addison: I know! That's exactly what I thought. I was like I have to do a deep dive. What I discovered is that *Saints* are people who live detached from our world. They are not people who are dead and are canonized because they lived a good life. They are people who are intimate with our world's pain. They are people who see this world the way God sees it. And because they see this world the way God sees it, they merge the world's what is and what will be. They're often called "souls on tiptoes." People who look beyond what is to get a glimpse of what could be, what will be, what should be. They're in tune with that prophetic vision that we see in Habakkuk 2:14 and Isaiah 11:9 that the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth like the waters cover the seas. And they make that so personal.

Randy: That's actually very optimistic.

Addison: It's very optimistic.

Randy: And in a world that is very pessimistic, and the church has been pessimistic sometimes. How refreshing is that? If we look beyond maybe the circumstances of what is into what God wants for people. Is that what I'm hearing?

Addison: Yeah, and if you go back and actually look at scripture -- right? So if we need a reformation, if we need a revolution we really should go back to the beginning and recapture the heart of scripture. You find this word *saint* used over 60 times in the New Testament. The word *Christian* is only used three times. Now I'm not campaigning against the term "Christian." It's not a bad identifier but it has become cheap because of the way it's understood right now by our culture. My thing is, people are saying, "Post Christian world -- we live in a post Christian world. We tried Christianity, it didn't work. Let's push it aside. Let's move on to secularism."

My thing is no, we actually haven't given this a fair shake. Like we haven't really taken on the

mantle and the responsibility and the opportunity of being the people of God and building for the kingdom. That's what a saint does. A saint builds for the kingdom. They see this world the way God sees it. And that has to invade our mundane everyday life.

So this is not an esoteric idea. This is something that's very personal, very specific to everyday life.

Sheila: When you talk about, use that phrase "souls on tiptoe," I think of the great faith chapter in Hebrews 11. They're commended because they live for things they never got to see; it was always ahead of them but they were commended for their faith.

Addison: Yes. They all could see the unseen. And because they could see the unseen they were considered people that the world wasn't worthy of. But because the world wasn't worthy of them they were exactly what the world needed. So *Saints* are disruptors. So it's like when we think of a saint we think of someone who is a goody two shoes. No, but *Saints*, they're actually the disruptive people.

So if you look at the early church they were subverting all of the norms. They were breaking down the barriers. They were changing the world. They were turning the world upside down. Why? Because they caught this vision, they caught a vision of salvation, of good news that was bigger than their individual lives and it required them to go into their worlds.

Sheila: That's what I think is huge. Because they sold everything. They had things in community. It was about something way bigger than themselves. I think in our western culture and in the church it's become very much about me, what can faith do for me? What can worship do for me? I think after a while that becomes very disillusioning.

Addison: Absolutely. And people realize, look, I've chased fulfillment. I've chased the good life at the altars of sex, stuff, and status. John calls it the pride of life. He calls it lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes. We've chased for it. We've looked for it here and we couldn't find it.

So when we as a church come in and basically guy, sex, stuff and status we Christianese it but basically, we're saying hey, live for these same things, we just put it within a Christian context. It is confusing and it is disempowering.

Sheila: That's great! I'm just thinking of somebody who is 45 sitting at home in Jackson Hole, Wyoming right now watching this.

Addison: That's really specific.

Sheila: I know, that's where I went for Christmas. It was lovely. But I'm just thinking, how would someone who is gone to church all their life, how would this understanding reshape their life?

Addison: I think the big thing that we all have to realize is that there is no separation, there is no distinction, and there is no barrier between the secular and the sacred. So what we do on Monday is just as holy as what we do on Sunday. When people start to see their whole lives, this integrated existence, their whole being as an act of worship, as an act of significance, as an act of purpose, and it is not just hey be a good Christian.

No, actually, what you're doing matters as a mom, as a dad, as a husband, as a worker, whatever field you find yourself in. Like that's intentional. There is purpose there and God is calling you to that place. And it is not just because you're not at church on Sunday. That's where the real stuff happens. No, that's where you're supposed to go.

If you look at Ephesians four, what is the responsibility of the church? To equip the *Saints* for the work of the ministry. So I actually hate the term, full time ministry -- part time ministry, I hate that! Because the *Saints* are the ones who are going out, who are empowered by the church to do ministry in their everyday lives.

Randy: So okay. What does this look like when Addison Bevere goes into a store as a saint?

Addison: Okay. So I'll answer that question. I do want to say this. The kingdom of God advances at the intersection of relationship. So real life, real meaning happens at that intersection of relationship. So first of all, a relationship with God and a relationship with each other; that's where the kingdom of God is revealed. So it is in our everyday lives. So for me...

Randy: Sounds like the two commandments, love the Lord your God with all your heart, love your neighbor as yourself.

Addison: Exactly. This is really basic stuff. So I share this story with you. When I was in Staples, probably a week and a half ago now, I was in Staples, I was getting my T.S.A. renewal for precheck and I was in the little cubicle in the middle of Staples. I sat down and a lady and I were making small talk. And she just asked me, "So what do you do?" I shared with her what I do. She goes, "Man! It must be so cool to do something that really matters. I just work at Staples."

Randy: To which you said...

Addison: Well, this is what I said. And I did not realize I was saying this until it was out of my mouth and it was too late to bring it back. I said, "That's the great life, human existence."

Sheila: Wow! That's a lot in Staples.

Addison: That's what I said to her. And then I was like oh my goodness! That just came out of my mouth. I'm like I have no idea what her background is, what her belief system is. I'm like I'm going to have to explain myself. And I did. I explained to her, "Look, the enemy of your soul, he is after your present because he knows that meaning happens in the present. So if he can convince you that meaning exists in the past or in the future he wins. He steals everything important about your life because of what you have is right now in this moment. Only God gets to exist in the past, present and future. We exist in the present."

I shared with her, "What you do day in and day out is significant because you are serving people,

you are interacting with people every single day." And we talked about that.

Sheila: How did she receive that?

Addison: This is what she said to me. She was quiet for what felt like a long time but it was probably only like ten seconds. And then she just looked at me and she said, "Thank you. That made my week." And she was getting a little emotional and that's when I was like oh man! I hope I didn't go too far with some of the things that I share.

But it is one of those things, Sheila and Randy, people, if you speak to the depths of who they are and not try to argue with them up here, but speak to what was woven into the fabric of their being, it says in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that eternity was written on our hearts. If you speak to that largeness in people they awaken to the wonder of God, they awaken to the wonder of life.

Randy: Yeah, and that takes an ability to see beyond what is and what could be, what should be, what God wants for someone which is exactly what you're talking about. We're called to as not... I don't want to knock the term "Christian" because it is dear to me. I know you're not, but we have to see beyond the label or the culture and into really what God has designed us to be.

Sheila: But it's almost like this recasting what it actually means to walk with God. That everywhere we walk there should be a difference. Every room we walk into there should be a shift. Because I had that conversation the other night.

I was in Dillard's and I was picking up lipstick. And the girl serving me said, "Would you pray for me?"

I was like, "Oh yeah! I'd love to pray for you."

She said, "I really want a ministry."

And it made me pause and I said, "What do you think a ministry is?"

She says, "Well, what you're doing."

I said, "No! What you're doing right now. God, I'm no more significant to God than you are."

Addison: It is so sad, if you look at Exodus 19, God came to meet with his people. He said, "I want you to be a nation of kings and priests."

And they said, "No. Actually, we want you to give us rules and regulations because we can manipulate, we can twist rules and regulations. We can control that."

And so what happened? He said, "Okay. We're going to create this order."

Then Jesus comes onto the scene and what does he do? He decentralizes it and now we are kings and priests everywhere we go. This is the radical thing that Paul writes in First Corinthians three where he says, "You are God's temple. God's temple is holy and that's exactly what you are." What he is saying is you are that microcosm where heaven meets earth. Everywhere you go you are supposed to reveal the faith, the hope, and the love that God has for this world and that happens in individual relationships.

And what the enemy does, he tries to steal the potential for impact by turning it into these abstract ideas, these grandiose ideas. And I know we've all done some amazing things for the kingdom of God on a macro level but let's be honest, where the rubber meets the road, where it really happens is how we do life with the people closest to us.

Sheila: But I'm looking out at our studio audience right now and I'm thinking, every single one of you is on this divine mission. You know that the greatness of God dwells in you. So wherever you go tonight or tomorrow, that's -- it's like, that's why I say I feel like it is a prophetic book because it is like so much bigger than just this idea of go to church on Sunday and then we're done.

Randy: So there's something else I want you to touch on before we run out of time. And that is the idea of holy. When we think of holy, I mean I know it means set apart but it also has another meaning which is "other" and we are supposed to be a part -- help me understand that a little bit because you got into it and I kept wrestling with it for like ever since our livecast interview; right?

Addison: It's difficult because it's literally something that can't be defined. So it's other than anything that we've seen. It's God's superlative quality. It's what makes him God is his holiness. That's why the Seraphim in Isaiah six, they're not yelling love, love, love, faith, faith, faith. They're yelling, "Holy, holy, holy!" Now is God love? Absolutely -- 100 percent! Is he faithful? Absolutely! But what they're responding to is God's otherness.

He is so amazing, he is so far beyond anything I could conceptualize. Then he turns around and he calls us his children. He calls us in Second Peter one, "partakers of his divine nature." He's like my holiness which is mine, like we can't earn our way to holiness. People have this idea of holiness as a destination. Like if you do this, if you don't do that, you're going to become holy. No! Being holy is about being his. It's about realizing how profound it is that we are his children. That we are his ambassadors. That we are called to reveal an otherness to our world that our world is longing and craving to see.

That's the big idea behind the *Saints* is the good life. It is not something you find. It is not something you earn. It is not something you achieve. It is someone you become. And it is in that journey of becoming that we find everything that our heart has been craving.

Sheila: I'm thinking of, you talked about the fact that so many millennials have walked away from the church. What is your hope and prayer how this message will impact those who think, I've done Christianity and it didn't work for me?

Addison: Well, I'm hoping it provides fresh language, number one because language is everything. So I'm hoping there is fresh language in here. But I also want people to realize that prophetic disruption always comes from the inside. It comes from the people that are within. You

have a nuanced understanding of the original design and the purpose. And so I want to see people revolutionize the church, Christianity from within. Not stand on the sidelines and cast stones and be critical and all that. Let's realize, hey, if we're called to be the people of God, the church has always been broken. It's always been imperfect since day one. So let's not stand on the sidelines. Let's go into the middle of the action, let's share this vision of what it could look like for us to be the church today, and let's lean into the tension.

Randy: And let's come with love not with criticism; right? Some people talk about God's bride in ways that you talk about my wife that way, we're going to have problems; right? And so I hear you. I love this affirmation of who we are in Christ as *Saints*. I hope people will pick up this book, Sheila.

Sheila: How has this impacted your life as a husband and a father?

Addison: So for me and I've had this conversation with my wife. I couldn't share this message unless I was living this at home. And for me, what it's done is shown me the significance of every single day. I have a ten-year old now; a ten-year old, eight-year old, five-year old, three-year old, I'm already seeing how quickly this goes. It's just so fast. I don't want to miss that. I don't want to miss the goodness that's around me because I'm trying to find something beyond what is in this moment.

And what this has done, Sheila, is it's helped me be in the present. It's helped me to see the beauty, the mystery, the wonder of each and every day so that I can be the father, I can be the husband, I can be the leader, and I can be the friend that God wants me to be in this season.

Randy: You cannot really top that. Dudley Hall says if you want to share the kingdom do it ten feet at a time. That's so beautiful. I think this book really, this message will maybe even revitalize the church one person at a time.

Sheila: I think that's definitely Addison's prayer and that's our prayer too. That's been my prayer for the last three years, Lord, let revival come but let it start with me. Let it start in me.

When that happens, it changes how we see the world completely.

Randy: It does. I think it ties directly into what we do as an organization, as you as a viewer. I want to send people this book, *Saints* by Addison Bevere when they partner with us in being the people of God and demonstrating God's goodness here on earth. I want to show you how to do that. Will you watch this with me?

On the mission field:

Randy: I'm here at a very remote part of Cambodia. There is nothing around here except for a few shacks. There is just not much here. And yet still, a human trafficker came through here many months ago and promised this young lady's sister a better life and some things -- lured her away. They haven't heard from her. She is, as far as they know gone. They have her picture and they have the prayer that she'll come back, the hope that they will see her again. She's very likely being forced to do things that no girl should be forced to do in places that are not fit for human living.

This is the reality here and in places all over the world. That's why Rescue Life is critical. We must first reach into places like this with education so that they'll know what to look out for when these predators come through. We must rescue the girls that we can and get them out of the sex trade. And we must restore them. We must give them a hope and a future.

We can do that. We can do it on a larger scale, but we have to have your help. I pray you'll help us as we try to help so many girls. We have to stop this abuse. It is not right. You can do something. Join with us as we Rescue Life.

End of video

In the studio:

Randy: Sheila, the amazing thing was that they didn't know where she was. And when we started talking to people that knew she had probably been taken out of Cambodia into an area.

You've been to some of those areas where these girls are trafficked.

Sheila: And the hard thing, Randy, the devastating thing is that so many of these girls think they're going for a better life. Their parents have no money. Sometimes there's only a mother. So this girl is told, "Hey, just over the border you're going to get a great job. You can work in the food industry. It will be amazing!" And the minute they get there, they're offered a meal, and so many of the girls that I talk to, their meal is drugged and they wake up in a small room with a man that they've never met in their life before and they realize that they're a prisoner. And it's the most devastating reality.

All our missions impact me, but I have to tell you, that our Rescue Life has left a profound impact on me because this is evil from the pit of hell. These people are so well organized, and it is innocence -- it is little girls. I've talked to so many little girls who said to me, "At night I would lay there, and it would be the sixth or seventh man that would come in." Sometimes I would say, "God, if there is a God, will you please send somebody to help?"

And we can do something. That's the thing. We have to be as organized as they are because they are very organized, but we can do something. We have partners on the ground in Southeast Asia where once we've reached these girls, once we've rescued them, there is a place to take them to restore but it means that we all have to do our part, Randy.

Randy: Absolutely! And we approach this thing, because it is a big problem, reach, rescue, restore. We reach in there, we tell young children what signs to look out for so that they don't get caught, they don't get duped. We rescue ones that are already in it, like Sheila, I know you've sat and hugged these poor girls. It just breaks your heart and it makes, as a father, it makes me angry at the same time.

Sheila: We've kicked down doors at midnight and brought five girls out.

Randy: Amen! And we'll restore, we'll give them a hope, we'll give them a future. And literally, that means oftentimes giving them skills, giving them something to do, a way to earn a

living. In fact, Sheila, would you show them your bracelet?

Sheila: I love this! And it's just a thank you. The girls that we've taken out and rescued, they make these. And for any gift at all, we're going to send you one of these. I'm praying God will so restore the souls of these girls that they will rise up to become prayer warriors in their nations and see God use their lives to make a difference! But we need you to help us.

Randy: Make the best gift you can. We've done this for a few years now, Sheila, so we have an idea of how much it kind of costs on average to get a child out of this and it comes up \$128. We have got a wonderful matching gift right now where a \$64 gift will have the same effect.

But here's the bottom line. We can do something -- all of us can do something and the more of us that do something the more we can reach in there and rescue, and give hope and get these people, these young, mainly girls, out of hell on earth.

Will you go online? Will you go to the phone right now? Do what you can. And know that when you join in *Rescue Life* you really are rescuing lives. Do it right now.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Behind the bright lights there is 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 \$250,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help *two* children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift we'll send you this beautiful "Freedom" bracelet handcrafted by survivors of human trafficking who want to say thank you for helping those still trapped. Wear it as a wonderful reminder to pray for the outreach.

With your gift of \$128 or more you'll receive the "Freedom" tote. This quality canvas tote bag is made by trafficked survivors who are now learning a new trade and includes spiritual life resources such as books, devotionals, CD's, or DVD's.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help rescue 20 children! And you may request our beautiful new bronze sculpture, "A Mother's Strength." 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. And so many young girls are forced into prostitution. They are trafficked because they are 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? Will you 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 so much! Please keep calling. And because we have this \$250,000 matching gift, it used to take \$128 to reach, to rescue, to restore that whole process in a child. Now for \$64 you can do that. Let's do it!

Randy: And when you do it, by the way, today ask for Addison's Bevere's book *Saints* and we

will send it to you when you support Rescue Life. Would you thank, everybody thank Addison for being here? I think this is such a great message that I want everyone to get ahold of it. So thank you for being here!

Addison: Thank you for having me.

Randy: Thank you for being with us. Thank you for coming back every day on *LIFE Today*.

Sheila: See you next time!