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Week 16: Mission feeding

James and Betty Robison

Sheri Rose Shepherd

James: Thank all of you. We welcome you. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. Years ago when we began the sit-down talk format and you didn't know but for about 30 years plus, I just was in stadiums and coliseums and preaching 600 citywide meetings. And then suddenly God led us to sit down and seek to call the family, God's family in the family room to help them know the Father.

One of our first guests was a beautiful lady named Sheri Rose Shepherd. She wrote a book that was a bestseller, *His Princess*. Now then they have asked that she would put together an incredible devotional book talking about *His Princess Everyday Devotional*: "Love letters from your king," which we all need. Well, we're really glad to have Sheri Rose back. Would you welcome Sheri Rose Shepherd to *LIFE Today*? Sheri, how are you?

You know since you were here and you've had a really remarkable journey but you've also had what you might just call one of those catastrophic moments that actually became kind of like almost a series of the kind of things that would pretty well, people call far more than career ending, almost to the point of life ending. So tell us what's going on because you're not through it, you're in it, but you're learning a whole lot in the process.

Sheri: In less than four weeks my entire world blew up. I was diagnosed with cancer, my marriage ended, everything I loved and lived for was gone. I was given eight weeks to live and I told the doctor, "Well, if I only have eight weeks to live, I like my hair extensions so I'm not going to do chemo." Because I won't have hair to sew them on to. So I was joking with him.

I literally had no idea how I was going to get through it at all. Because I'd been speaking every

weekend for 25 years I realized when my world fell apart I didn't have a church community. Women who was a reader of *His Princess* put me in a little beach cottage and said, "God told me to wipe out my vacation rental and put you here for a couple of years so you have an opportunity to get healing and to get well."

When I checked in there right after that my mom got diagnosed with cancer also, and I don't know my mom growing up. She didn't raise me so it was like moving a stranger in my home. And being raised Jewish, my whole family didn't want anything to do with me being a Christian; now they're all born again, at every legacy, every area, everybody saved.

But I'll tell you the biggest thing was for my children, we were very close, and when I got diagnosed with cancer, the mourning process started before, especially if doctors tell you your mom is going to be gone in eight weeks, that will tip anybody's child. And now today, here I am almost five years later and I guess they were wrong.

[Applause]

There's still tumors all over my lymphatic system that we're working through. I am just taking one day at a time. But I always think to myself when people say, "Oh my gosh! You've been diagnosed with cancer!" It's like, well, you're going to die too. I didn't know if you knew but news flash -- we're all going to die.

But one thing that has a lot of times now, what I like to do, is tell my story through Philippians 4:8 because well, people will say, "Well, why did you lose your health if you're an all organic eater?" Or "How did that happen with your family?" Or "Where was God in that?"

I believe there is a moment where you have to say as a Christian, was Jesus' life on a cross enough for me to follow him? And there is that breakthrough breakdown moment. Now I started with a breakdown moment where I asked the doctor to assist me to go home to be with the Lord. I didn't feel I had anything to look up to -- not because of the health. The cancer was the easiest thing I went through. It was four crisis at the exact same time that I'll never talk about

because I don't want the devil to have any credit. I don't want him to have to get to hear what he did.

But it was so catastrophic that right before then, I was the speaker for the Christian Counselor's Association, and I know it was God because I gave back the honorarium and said, "Use this for someone that will need professional counselling that can't afford it." And they had called me a few weeks later to book me for the following year to speak for them and I had gone numb and all I could explain is... They said, "Oh we just want to tell you all our good reports. We want to book you again for next year."

I was like, "Aah! Aah!"

And she goes, "Sheri, are you okay?" She thought maybe I was having a stroke or something.

I said, "I can't feel. Can't feel."

She goes, "Honey, hold on. I'm going to ask you a list of questions and you're just going to say yes or no." And there were about a hundred of them.

So she started asking me all these questions and she said, "You know that scholarship you gave back? We need to get you help like right now because most people only experience one to two at the most of what you walked through, I've not seen it all at once."

And I believe that's probably what caused, honestly, the cancer because the Bible says a man's body can withstand sickness but who can withstand a crushed spirit? So the beauty of Philippians 4:8 in this story is that because I didn't have the love growing up of a family, I'm a first generational Christian.

I had a dad that absolutely loves and adores me, but I didn't have a loving family. When my parents divorced no one was divorced. So when the doctors gave me eight weeks that was the first time my parents came together with me in a room and said, "What can we do?" I said,

"You're all I have left! Even though I don't know you, mom, I need you to love each other. I need you to somehow be friends."

And now they're really good friends and I've watched healing happen with them. I got to learn who God is when no one else is there for you. I literally said to the Lord, how am I ever going to find my way back to you, God? Meaning I loved him, I didn't walk away from him ever but how am I ever going to find my way back to joy, peace? How am I ever going to be healed from this much heartbreak at one time and this much betrayal? It is too much. It is overwhelming.

And the Lord was so specific with me. He said, "Go back to before you met all those people, before you were a wife, before you were a mother when you just knew me" when I was at your crusade as a baby Christian in the Lord, single young woman. And he says to me, "Go back to me -- just remember me."

So what I did is I started playing the worship songs like when you know you're dating someone and then you get married and then 40 years later you go back to the song that you fell in love with and it kind of stimulates those feelings? So I started with just stimulating those feelings and then I started with giving myself grace and getting help. Because the beautiful thing God did through this is there was healing that needed to happen to me that I didn't know way before the world blew up. And now I feel like the most exciting thing for me is to be able to say I experienced, I knew God like Job said but now I've experienced it for myself. And the most beautiful thing is when my kids were going why is my mom going through all this?

Now you know what's so beautiful four years later? Because I didn't let the doctors assist me, because I didn't give up, my daughter is in full-time missions and getting ready to do another missions trip with the Dream Center. She just came off of the World Race. My son... And here's what... I'll never forget sitting there with my baby; I have an 11-year spread because God has a wild sense of humor. The night before Steve's vasectomy I got pregnant with this little girl. Anyway, I love her and she is one of my best friends in all the world. But when she said to me, "Mom, because of what you survived, it trumped everything you've said to me about the Lord."

And I didn't realize people were watching. So I had gone dark for a couple of years meaning I didn't do any bookings, I didn't do anything.

And one day a Christian leader catastrophically fell and it shook me to my core because it's a good friend of mine. And his child came to me and said, "I have a question for you. I have been in your home, and off and on visited with you, and she said, "Can you tell me, my dad walked away from family, ministry, and he's happier than he's ever been. You have stayed faithful to God and you have cancer and you're alone and you've lost everything. Why should I follow you, your faith, over my happy daddy's faith of living for himself?"

And so the first thing I did is tell her the truth. I have that question every day for God, where is the blessing in the obedience of following you? Where are the people that should be there for me that I was there for? All those thoughts. I said, "But honey, the difference is..." and God filled my mouth because trust me, I didn't know how I was going to answer that one! And he filled my mouth and I said, "The difference is the slide show at our funerals, the legacy we will leave on the earth, and our placement in heaven." And when you can draw from that trilogy, what will I be remembered for? Now we can say, "Oh yeah, he was happier." And look at the new this, look at the money, and look at the blessings from being sinful but people don't understand that eternity is a long time but your legacy... so I had to make a decision to be honest.

And you said this at a conference, my first crusade, so I kind of feel like this is really special because you're my first interview back that I feel like it is so special because you had a call where you were going to make a decision like is God good or not, regardless of what happens? So I had this breakthrough moment, after the breakdown, where I said, you know what, Lord? Your life is enough for me to follow you. If you don't answer another prayer, if I don't ever have a husband to love me, if I don't ever remarry, if I don't ever have a ministry, if I never have anything, your life was enough.

And I'm not kidding, something, when I answered that little girl's question about the slide show and God was enough, and going back to my first love, wait! Let me remember God when it was just me and God, and I was just this honeymoon with Jesus phase of my life that it didn't even

phase me what anybody else did or didn't do. My faith was not in watching what happened or didn't happen to me. My faith wasn't in watching.

And I tell people all the time. They go, "Well, look at all the Christians that say their Christians and what they're doing." I said, "You aren't called to follow Christians. You're called to follow Christ! Why is your faith in Christians?" That is a dangerous place to put your faith. Follow Christ. Christ would not do that. And why is God getting all the blame for Satan's work? And that was just... All the sudden this very broken, could not feel, could not touch, people were coming up to me and going, everywhere I go someone has a story about *His Princess* and how... I couldn't feel them. I couldn't respond to them. I literally was like I had a mental breakdown or something. I literally could not feel anymore. Nothing!

And now I have joy before the healing. I have joy in the circumstance. I do understand what it is like. And there is freedom because now my joy isn't attached to a person, a place, or pain or happiness. It is not attached to those. Now I'm able to enjoy those things as they come and let go of those things that I thought I needed so badly. I now know that God is enough and your legacy means so much more than the life you wanted.

And when I first did my first Facebook Live, I decided to face my audience, I was scared. And 18,000 people joined me live and that took me back. I thought maybe a few hundred. And all of the sudden, then I got a new book contract with Focus on the Family for a children's book line. Then I just got another contract for this book. And I'm like, what just happened? Now I'm here with you guys on *LIFE Today*. I'm like wait a minute! And I'm doing conferences, traveling with the Fish Radio and doing their big events. I'm like, how in the world? Wait, Lord, we were done. We were going home. We did it. I had completion and now...

James: You were supposed to be dead!

Sheri: And now, more importantly, Betty, I can say this to you! I have wanted to lose 30 pounds for my whole life and never could and I was forced to eat healthy because of the cancer and I finally lost that stupid weight!

James: It is amazing what God can do with a dead person. When you actually lose your life in Christ you find it; when we lose our life in his purpose. I wish everyone would get that. That if you really, this is not just a cute verse. This is an absolute truth. Jesus said, "If you'll lose your life..." and if you really come to understand that, and sometimes it takes a little while to fully understand it but he said, "Lose your life in me" which literally means in his kingdom purpose.

What he wishes and wills to accomplish through yielded clay that he shapes as a vessel of honor. So when you lose your life in him, think about what he said now, you find it. Find what life? The life he offers, the life of fullness, of fruitfulness, the life abundant. Not necessarily with abundance, but abundant with or without abundance. This is the life he offers.

Betty: What you are describing, as I listen to you, is the beautiful relationship that God desires so much with every one of us. And it is through those tough times because we've experienced that too, in different situations and things that come at us. But I have found the richness of God's love and his joy and his peace that passes all understanding. And even in the midst of the turmoil, God is right there.

Sheri: Also, I'm realizing now, life is not fair. It's never going to be fair while we're here on this side. And so if I am looking for justice on this side of eternity, I have a just God and I'm sorry but eternity is a long time so those of you that are hurting people and sinning, have a good time because it is over. Eternity is forever -- and every choice and decision that you made.

And I realize when an eagle wants to kill a snake, what God kind of just showed me is they'll go and they'll pull the snake off the ground. Where we try to fight the snakes on the ground where the snake is powerful. But he'll pull it off of it. So our job isn't to win a battle with the devil, it is to change the battle ground. And when we change the battle ground it changes everything.

So I changed the battle ground and I was like, I just need to be me. I cannot change what has been done. And I still to this day, I'm going to be honest with you, and you have no idea the influence you've had on me, and your next guest who was the only friend I felt safe calling, Lisa

Beverly because I was so scared from so much massive betrayal, I didn't even know what end was up. And she didn't even know that until tonight that she was the only person I called, and the only person I felt safe to be transparent and truthful with.

But I'm realizing now you don't have to have everybody know your business. You don't. You don't need to keep reliving. You don't need to keep returning to it but you do need to mourn it. And you need to mourn it and you need to mourn the loss. You cannot put a scripture over a broken heart. It will not work.

James: You actually put in *His Princess Every Day*, "Love Letters from your King." And what you're doing here is you're sowing daily devotional thoughts that actually lift people to the higher plain.

And I'm sorry, Sheri that this is not Oprah, it is not Dr. Phil so we're actually out of time. Or I think we could just go on and on and on. Do you appreciate Sheri sharing so beautifully and so honestly?

[Applause]

Sheri, what our amazing viewers, and I've said this not because I'm trying to manipulate you with flattery, I'm expressing the truth to you. You have been blessed by the testimony. You have been blessed as you have seen us bring people through here, some well-known authors, writers, speakers, preachers, leaders and some people you never heard of but God was so big in them and you've appreciated it. But you know what's really amazing? You know every day, if you watch James and Betty, we're going to show you a broken heart. And there is a perfect miracle for that situation. And you watch; and I believe you watch with a heart of love and compassion, of genuine care. And somehow, supernaturally God lets you see through his eyes.

I want you to look at a missionary right now who is just a kid, literally, not even in his teens, when we went with his dad and we marched into hell. Well, his dad is now with the Lord. He is now a missionary overseer of what you birthed and what you've supported. Now I want you to

listen closely. You're going to hear more than a missionary's son, more than a missionary, you're going to hear the voice of the Father and you're going to express his will, his love, and you will extend his hands and they transform everything. Watch!

On the mission field:

Announcer: The death of one's child has been described as something that lives with a parent forever. For mothers like these, the death of one child is something they have not long forgotten because they have experienced the loss of multiple children.

Open Captions: Two of my children died on the same day because of hunger.

Isak: For me it is difficult to fathom, and I think you'll find the same thing. That it just blows your mind to actually understand what the people of this village have gone through. You know the house just behind me and the family that's there, they've buried two children -- three children in the last year.

Announcer: The devastating reality is children's deaths in Southern Africa are continuing to occur from the simple fact their mothers do not have enough food for them.

Isak: This is a mother who lost this little girl's twin, and two other children at the age of three, six, and eight in January of this year because of something as simple as not being able to get enough food to feed her family.

What do we do about... how do you stop this death? How do you stop a village like this from burying child after child? How do you stop the pain and suffering that these families go through? Because let me explain something to you. These are children who, when they die, their mother and their father, a piece of their heart dies as they bury their child. What do we do you say? It's simple. We bring mission feeding to this village and we save this village children's lives.

End of video

In the studio:

James: That's Isak Pretorius, Peter and Anne Pretorius' son. And he's just a treasure. He's an example of God's love through a yielded missionary.

Betty, we've seen those beautiful mothers with a broken heart and those little children that are really the greatest treasure in their life. They don't have great means and enjoyment and pleasures like we do. Their family is their pleasure. And it's their joy and they're such awesome moms. Hard to imagine how much pain they feel just because they can't give their child something they need. But we can.

And Betty, our viewers have literally helped us save over 15 million children and people's lives that were desperate like that. That is not an exaggeration, that is a fact. We've led far more people than that number to Christ in those areas because they've seen the love of God and they want to hear about the God of this love and how to know him through Christ.

So Betty, I'm believing every believer watching today is going to make a gift to help us feed 350,000 children right now that we have found that need our help. Gifts of \$30, \$50, or \$100 feed three, five or ten children. Betty, what do you long to see everybody watching us do right now?

Betty: You know as I watched that along with you, my first response was, thank you, Jesus! That you have given me an opportunity to give of myself, to give of you and to give hope to those mothers that love their children as much as we love our own children. Thank you, God, that I can reach out in love and support to feed these precious little ones that need an opportunity to run around and play and be children like God created them to be.

So please join with us. Let's be that blessing, let's be that hope for this mother.

James: Father, I ask you to touch every heart right now and they'll respond in love; in Jesus' name.

Would you go get your bankcard and know I'm going to use it like a check? Or if you write a check, just know that I'm going to make a check to *LIFE* because that's what I'm giving. But get your bankcard and go online or dial the number that's there as a prayer line and say, "Here's my gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to feed three, five or ten children for the next months."

Will you do that right now please? Just go and get it. And know that the moment you put that gift in the mail and we let the missionaries know, "The help you pray for that those parents, those mothers long for, that those children desperately need is on the way." You're going to meet the need joyfully.

We have some beautiful gifts to send you. The *Global Impact Bible* is really quite phenomenal. We have the journal too. But for those of you who will help us with ten, this Bible shows you in the word all the different events and people that have been affected by the Word of God. They were not necessarily great Christians or leaders or preachers, but they were impacted by the Word of God, and it impacted everything around them. It is a phenomenal, phenomenal book.

We also have the beautiful bronze of "A Mother's Strength." These precious ladies not only go and get the water or the load, but they so often are carrying a child, sometimes more than one, and leading others. A beautiful example of the Father's love through these mothers. And we're sharing the Father's love when we give them life and hope. Thank you so much for making that call. Thank you for the gift.

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 350,000 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 life saving 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 *Global Impact of Life Journal*. This softcover journal includes pictures from the mission field and inspiring scriptures as a reminder of your impact in giving to bless lives around the world.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the *Global Impact Bible*. This English Standard Version presents a fascinating guide to the impact of the bestselling book of all time filled with quotes from well-known figures, photographs and reproductions of fine art. It highlights the many surprising ways scripture has shaped civilization.

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, "A Mother's Strength."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

In the studio:

James: Well, from the bottom of our heart we want to say thank you in behalf of the missionaries, and especially those parents of those precious little ones whose lives you're saving.

If you'd like to have Sheri Rose Shepherd's book, *His Princess Every Day Devotional*, it is quite a big book. It is quite impressive. We'll be glad to send it to you if you would give someone life and say, "Would you please send that?" Yes, we will because we want to bless you and she is a blessing.

Would you join me and Betty in saying thanks to Sheri Rose Shepherd? Sheri, bless you!

You're doing good! God is blessing.

Thank you for watching. Thank y'all for being here!