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Week 30: WFL

Sheila Walsh

Pete Greig

Sheila: Hi! I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. About three years ago I started a study on prayer just from my own life because I felt it was one of the areas in my own life that was weakest. I love to study the Word of God, I love to speak but I felt like my prayer life needed some help. So I ordered as many books as I could... And one of them was this. One of the things, the reasons I ordered it was because I thought the title was brilliant -- *Dirty Glory* by a guy called Pete Greig. So I'm very excited to welcome him today to the show. Thanks for being with me!

Peter: It's a joy to be with you, Sheila. Thanks for having me.

Sheila: The first thing I noticed when I read the first few pages of *Dirty Glory*, I was late in getting on the bus. It was clear that ten years before you ever wrote this that something had begun in you. Would you tell us like what was the genesis of this whole passion for prayer?

Peter: I just got hungry to know God better. It sounds kind of predictable and lame, but it was very real. I was waking in the night weeping, saying I was scared of being the guy, Jesus says at the end of the age there will be these guys who will present their resumes to Jesus and say, like, look at all the stuff I did for you, and he'll say, "I never knew you." I was really worried I might be that guy because I was busy pastoring, planting churches but my personal prayer life was a bit shallow. I outsourced my prayer to godly old ladies. Our church prayer meeting was a few old ladies and a goat. And the goat wasn't very committed.

Then I, honestly, I just... I was kind of getting applause in the Christian world, and yet I read the book of Acts and what we were doing was nothing like the riots and revival. I just got hungry. Saint Augustine said, "Thou has put salt on our lips that we might thirst for thee." I just got re-thirsty. So I just started asking God, "Help me!"

And it was weird, but every path took me back to this place of prayer. The world doesn't need more products, personalities, and programs. It needs more of the presence of God. And the only way you get that is through the bended knee. So that was the beginning of my journey. And then it became something a bit bigger.

Sheila: You talk about a vision you had in a place called, I wasn't even sure where this was, Cape St. Vincent?

Peter: Yeah. Yeah.

Sheila: What happened there? That's pretty astounding!

Peter: Sheila, honestly for years I didn't want to tell anyone about it because I thought they'd think I was crazy. But I was a long-haired student hitchhiking around Europe. We weren't like being religious, we were just having a really good time. And one night, my friend Nick and I ended up camped on the most southwesterly point of Europe, which is this place, Cape St. Vincent.

It's pretty cool. I wish I could take you all there. It's like you've got the Mediterranean ocean to your south, you've got the Atlantic Ocean to your west. In the middle of the night I couldn't sleep, and I got up and I began to try and pray. I faced south. I thought, wow! It's Africa. Began to pray for Africa. I faced west and I began to pray for America. Then I turned my back to those two oceans and began to pray for Europe and imagined all those countries, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany; you know it well. Eventually you end up in the Middle East and China.

As I began to pray, the weirdest thing happened and please don't write me off, but I began to shake violently. I heard this electrical sound. I thought I was being electrocuted. I didn't realize I was having a spiritual experience. I remember looking up thinking there must be like electric cables that are short circuiting through me. But I was on a cliff. By the way, if you're going to shake violently, a cliff is the worst place to do it.

And then I had a vision and my eyes were open. But I saw the pages of like an old atlas, all the different countries and I saw this army of young people rising up out of the pages. I don't know how long it lasted for. It was the strangest thing. And then I didn't know what to do about it. When God gives you something like that, where do you start? And it was a number of years later that I got hungry for God, I began praying, others began to join me and that was the birth of this movement called 24-7 Prayer that we're now in over half the nations on earth. I think maybe that was a little bit of what I saw that day on that cliff.

Sheila: Well, yeah! Absolutely. You have lived to see that vision become a reality. How do you go though from say you and a few friends in a basement praying to suddenly the sparks going out all across the world?

Peter: Well, it is a genuine movement. Everyone wants to call their thing a movement, but this really is. Sheila, if you'd come to me and said, "I've had this idea; we should get people praying night and day around the world" I would have told you that is a bad idea. But we just started praying. We always say it's like God came to our prayer room and he sneezed and then this thing just began to spread.

Initially, we thought, wow! We're going to fill the year 2000 with non-stop prayer, which is pretty crazy because back then you had to go to South Korea or South America to even see anything like that. And then that was obviously over 20 years ago, and we now have been praying non-stop ever since in multiple countries, working with everyone from the Catholic church at the highest levels through to the good old Salvation Army at street level. So it's been a wild ride.

We're trying to connect prayer, mission, and justice -- those three things together. We're not really interested in just being crazy spiritually. We're really interested in how you can be... Life is such a gift! We've got to be passionate; right? So how do we be passionate about Jesus but massively relevant and attractive in the culture? That's what we're trying to work out how to do. Probably fail most of the time.

Sheila: No, no, no! Prayer, mission, and justice -- that is the heart of Christ. That is expressing who Christ is.

You have another book and it is called, *How to Pray; A Simple Guide for Normal People*. I love that! Tell me about that book.

Peter: Well, after 20 years of prayer, I just figured people... Everyone is asking that question. They know that prayer is the key. Even if they don't go to church, all the surveys say most people pray. But the question is how you really do it. So I wanted to condense some of what we've learned, mostly through mistakes over 20 years, into a simple book. There are two types of people: Firstly, the people who are brand-new to Christian faith who are saying, okay, I guess it is the relationship. How do I hear God without kissing my brains good-bye? How do I get my head around disappointments and the fact that prayer doesn't always seem to work? And how do I see more miracles? And how do I grow in a relationship with him?

But the other group of people I was writing it for was people who have been around the block a few times. You wouldn't believe how many senior Christian leaders, some of them quite famous have come to me, like Nicodemus in the night saying, "My guilty secret is my prayer life." So I wanted to help people. Nicky Gumbel, our mutual friend who is one of the pioneers of Alpha, he did a daily devotional. It's like I can't remember, it's got something like two million daily users.

Sheila: Yeah! I use it.

Peter: Yeah! It's phenomenal. Well, he said to me because he wrote the forward. He said to me, "I'm so glad you've called it *How to Pray!*"

I said, "Why?"

He said because the day in the year, Sheila that is caught on Bible in One Year that's called "How to Pray" is the single most downloaded day, every single year without exception. And it is not like a super, it's not Christmas day or super Christian day. He said, "There you have proof that that is the question we are all asking more than any other." The one day we'll all be 30 seconds before the flat line we better know how to have a conversation with God.

Sheila: One of the things that you wrote that I love, you said, "The point of prayer is not the power it releases but the person it reveals." To me, that is powerful. It is all about Jesus.

Peter: The vision is Jesus. That's it. We so easily reduce prayer to a transaction. It's like a trick. Like God is this big algorithm in Silicon Valley and if we can just get the code, we can be millionaires or something. God is relational. Look at the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in relationship. In lock down, we found out how hard it is just to be a normal family. Well, he is Trinity for eternity and he's getting on really well with himself. So he is good at relationships. And we're not.

Prayer is relational and therefore, it is primarily about encountering God and growing in relationship with him. One of the things that drives me crazy with God is I always want to know the what, the why, the how, the where, the when and he mostly just wants to tell me he loves me. It drives me crazy. I need some guidance here. He goes, "You're great."

[Laughter]

So he is profoundly relational. And prayer, I do believe in miracles, I've seen a lot of miracles but ultimately prayer is about a relationship, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

Sheila: I was interviewing a guy called Louie Giglio recently and he said if every time you fall flat on your face you don't hear God say over your shoulder, "Beloved," you've missed the whole point. I love that!

What we're going to do and I'm going to tell our viewers here, you need to stay tuned the whole way through this show because we're going to premier a video here of the "U.K. Blessing." Now you had a part in that, Pete. Tell me about that.

Peter: I saw a video from Pittsburg where a bunch of churches, some of your viewers would have seen this, got together and they took that beautiful "Blessing" song that Stephen Furtick and others have written, and they all did it on a zoom thing and released it to bless the city of Pittsburg. I saw that and I wept. It's so powerful.

I found one of my closest friends, a guy called Tim Hughes, who has written a lot of worship songs that people would be familiar with. I said, "Tim, we've got to do this in the U.K. We're broken, COVID-19 is hitting us hard. Church has been sidelined. When the church does get profiled in the mainstream media it's mostly for being critical and negative. We need to do this." I think one or two other people, I'm sure it wasn't just because of me, said to Tim, "We've got to do this."

Tim got together the most amazing array of worship leaders in about ten days and we released this song. It's like a big choir. And it's everyone -- it's the Salvation Army through to the Kingdom Choir who played at the royal wedding through to Hillsong and just everyone, Graham Kendrick, but none of their names are used. It is beautiful.

Sheila: How can people get in touch with you? Do you have a website you direct people to?

Peter: Yeah. Just 24-7Prayer.com. We've got a lot of resources. Jesus said to us, "Help people pray." That's all we do. We don't charge for a thing. Just get the stuff. There are daily devotionals on there. There is stuff to help... We've had thousands and thousands of night and day prayer rooms. However we can help you we want to do that.

Sheila: I just want to say thank you so much for joining us today. I know people will go to the website. Also, Pete's books, *Dirty Glory* and *How to Pray*, a guide for people like me. But thank you so much for being with us. We're so grateful.

One of the things we do here at *LIFE* is that we believe our faith has to have feet to it. So we're in the middle of drilling 350 wells around the world right now. So as I thank you, I'm going ask our viewers to take a look at this. But thank you, Pete Greig.

On the mission field:

Announcer: We can all relate to washing dishes, but would you eat off dishes that were washed in this water? For Kunmou, who lives in Cambodia, this water shared with livestock is all she has to clean with. Even worse, it's all she has to drink.

We asked Kunmou to tell us about her water which caused visible anguish. But once she was able to speak this was her response.

Open Captions:

>> When I gather water, I know that it's not clean. But I have to bring it home for my children to drink. It's our only choice for them to live.

Announcer: Tragically, Kunmou's story is far from unique. Throughout the developing world, contaminated drinking water is a serious problem that kills millions. When we visited Kunmou she had already lost a three-year old son to waterborne illness.

In the past few years we've seen trending progress for clean water initiatives. But recent global events now threaten the compassion of support which has made these efforts possible. Because clean water saves lives and without clean water children die.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: It is so hard to watch those pictures. But I've got to tell you, it is way harder when you are there and you're watching these mothers get this water and drink it and the children. You can see there's animals in the river, the water is filthy! But it is literally all they've got.

I don't know if it hits you like this does me. I cannot believe we're still dealing with this in this day and age. If you think of how the world has progressed, how so many things have been alleviated, the fact that people, children are still dying simply because there is no clean water is just wrong.

What I've seen is both sides. I've walked with moms to these dirty rivers or to hand-dug wells and looked at the quality of the water and it takes everything in me not to reach out and say don't! But it is all they've got. What a choice! But I've also gone to places where there is a well that has been dug by partners of *LIFE Outreach*, *LIFE Today*, and I've watched the children there. It is night and day difference. They're well, they're happy. They're the way children should be. They're laughing.

We have made a commitment this year to put in 350 wells. You've helped us already to put in 200. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! So this is for the final 150 wells. But here's the deal, if you do more, we will put more wells in because the need is astronomical in so many parts of the world. I just wonder how many tears do these mothers have to cry before we notice and do something? Maybe you're used to watching this and you think, well, I know that people will take care of it. Why don't you and I

make a fresh commitment that we will take care of it? No matter what we've done before, that we will all do something.

So for \$48 you can provide clean drinking water for ten children, basically for their lives. Most of these wells last about 70 years. If you can do more, \$144 will give 30 children in a village, that's like a classroom full, clean water. Some of you would be able to do more, you'll be able to put in a whole well, \$4800. That's really nothing to be able to drill a well that will give 1,000 people clean water for their lives.

I read somewhere, I think it was an Irish statement of William Burke who said, "All it takes for evil to flourish is for good people to do nothing." This is an evil when children have to drink that kind of water. Let's do something in Jesus' name. Call that number. Go online. Make the very best gift possible. Thank you!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Dirty, diseased filled water! How desperate would a mother need to be to consider giving this contaminated substance to her child? For many mothers and their families living in extreme poverties, this is their only choice.

With your help, they won't have to make this choice ever again. Mission Water for Life provides clean disease-free water for thousands of children and their families, giving them a life free from the fear of death.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish the final 150 water wells this year. Your gift of \$48 will help provide water for ten people. \$72 will provide for 15. \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime. And a gift of \$4,800 will help sponsor a complete well, serving up to 1,000 people.

With your gift we'll send you Today is a Good Day, seasonal devotional sets, broken out

into the four seasons of the year. This beautiful set features a daily scripture, inspirational thoughts, and a place for you to journal your own thoughts, prayers and insights from God's word.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the leather-bound life-giving Proverbs Journal, filled with wisdom and daily encouragement from Proverbs, including lined pages for your personal notes.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4,800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request "A Mother's Strength" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of video

In the mission field:

Sheila: This hand-dug well is full of contaminated water. It's the only source of water for this village. The mothers and their children, they come out here every day with their buckets and they gather water. And the mothers know there is a potential that this water will kill their children because there's all sorts of animal dung in here. Someone told me that snakes get in here, mosquitoes lay their eggs and so many of the children in the village have malaria. I just talked to a mom who lost her 12 year old son because of malaria.

But this is the water that is killing these children and that is why they need a well. A drilled well that will go down deep and give fresh clean water. This should not be normal for any child! And we want to give them a new normal, in Jesus' name! Fresh, clean, safe water!

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: If our lines are busy, keep calling. Let's make a difference in Jesus' name. Let's put our faith into action. Pete, I just want to say thank you so much for who you are, for all you're doing. It's been great to talk to you.

Peter: Thanks for having me!

Sheila: Love it! And now people, get your handkerchiefs out because seriously, I've watched this video 20 times and I've sobbed and worshipped every time. We're now going to watch "The U.K. Blessing."

[The U.K. Blessing]

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make his face shine upon you
And be gracious to you
The Lord turn his face toward you
And give you peace

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make his face shine upon you
And be gracious to you
The Lord turn his face toward you
And give you peace

Amen, amen, amen

Amen, amen, amen

Lord bless you and keep you
Make his face shine upon you
And be gracious to you
The Lord turn his face toward you
And give you peace

Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen

We pray a blessing, manna rain down from heaven. This isn't second guessing. We know that we are protected. May the peace that supports us with understanding be our message. Grace and favor is in your nature, in your essence.

May his favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family, and your children
And their children, and their children
May his favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family, and your children
And their children, and their children

May his favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family, and your children
And their children, and their children

May his favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family, and your children
And their children, and their children

May his presence go before you
And behind you, and beside you
All around you, and within you
He is with you
He is with you
In the morning, in the evening
In your coming, and your going
In your weeping and rejoicing
He is for you
He is for you

He is worthy
He is worthy
He is worthy
He is worthy
He is for you
He is for you
He is for you

Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen

May his favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family, and your children
And their children, and their children

May his presence go before you
And behind you, and beside you
All around you, and within you
He is with you
He is with you
In the morning, and the evening
In your coming, and your going
In your weeping and rejoicing
He is for you, he is for you
He is for you, he is for you
He is for you, he is for you
He is for you, he is for you
He is for you, he is for you
[End of song]