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Week 31: WFL

Sheila Walsh

Dr. David Jeremiah

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. Whenever we walk through a crisis, it always seems that history reveals that God places certain men or women on the scene to speak to that to bring comfort to the body. I certainly know that is true of my friend, Dr. David Jeremiah whose new book, *Shelter in God: Your Refuge in Times of Trouble* could not be timelier.

Dr. Jeremiah, welcome to the program. Thank you for being with us.

David: Sheila, thank you for having me!

Sheila: Oh gosh, it is such a joy! 2020 is a year like no other. We haven't walked through something like this. When did you realize, you know what? I need to write this book.

David: Well, it is kind of an interesting thing because I had worked on these Psalms over the years and I love the Psalms. Somebody once told me there is more tear stains on the book of Psalms than any other book in the Bible. I think we have all discovered it now because the Psalms speak to all of our situations.

I was talking to our publisher one day and we decided that maybe there was something we could say that would speak into the hurt. But really, if you want to know the truth we got a call from New York City, and we have some friends there in the hotel business, and they were telling us that they were booking all these hotel rooms for people that came to

help and people that were getting out of the hospital. They wanted to know if I had anything we could put in the hotel room that they could read that would be an encouragement to them in the midst of this crisis.

Those were some of the things that happened. And then the book just happened. It set an all-time record for us because from start to finish it was four weeks.

Sheila: Oh my gosh!

David: So we were all kind of laughing. When the publisher tells you they can't do it, don't believe them. They can!

Sheila: I'll remember that. You and Donna have such a love for New York City and this whole project, *Shelter in God* is one of the most beautiful things. Because also at the end of the book you include a plan of salvation. It will be interesting, only eternity will reveal the fruits of all that.

David: Yeah. Sheila, the other night I was watching the news and they showed one of the pictures of Times Square with nobody there, just totally empty, and it almost made me cry. Because we've been there so many times, we've done those Christmas specials there and we've recorded a lot of our teaching sessions there. What's happened to that city is so sad. And yet, I think it's coming back and may be back further than we thought it might even be by now. But we're so grateful that we have this opportunity in New York City because we're on television there, we're on the radio there and now we've been able to place a book in the hands of many people who live there that hopefully is going to make a difference in their lives.

Sheila: In your book, *Shelter in God*, you reflect a lot on the life and times of David. Did you see parallels between what David walked through and what we are walking through?

David: You know, a lot of people glorify David because they know about his great

leadership as king, his son Solomon. But David spent a lot of time as a fugitive and eight of his Psalms, including several that are in this book were written while David was running away from the jealousy of Saul who wanted to kill him. Saul, at one time, had 30,000 of his soldiers and they only had one objective, find David and kill him. And David was running, he was hiding, he was in despair. Some of the Psalms he wrote during that time reflect a lot of the emotions many of us are feeling right now.

Sheila: As a pastor, I wondered, what has it been like for you because I can't imagine Easter Sunday and you're not in church? How have you encouraged your own soul during this time?

David: Well, Sheila, you're absolutely right. There's a good side and a bad side of all of this. The good side is that every weekend now I'm speaking to over 80,000 people, which I never have a chance to do. We do that through television but not through the services of the church.

But I'll be honest with you, when I get done speaking to an empty auditorium and I walk back into the green room... last week I just looked at my friend back there and said, "I don't think I can do this again." It is so hard to do that when you're used to having people in front of you, and you're so fired up about your material and those seats don't do anything for you. They just stare at you and they don't give you any hope or help.

Sometimes you wonder, is this even being heard by anybody? It is very rare. And if you're a speaker and you've been preaching as long as I have, this is one of the hardest things I have ever done and only by the grace of God can I keep doing it.

Sheila: Yeah! That makes total sense. I know that my husband, Barry and I, we watch you every week and I know it has to be hard when you are speaking to an empty house but God is taking your words and they are powerful. A lot of people are asking a question, "What is God doing?" When people ask you, "What is God doing" during this pandemic what do you say?

David: Well, for one thing, he is one by one knocking out everything that we have depended on that we thought would bring us hope and happiness and leaving us with the ultimate answer which is God himself. I think that's a good thing because we have become very self-satisfied and self-centered as a people. Even in the church, it's about our buildings and our budgets and our programs and all of that. And all of the sudden those are all gone. And all we have left is God and that is not a bad thing! I think if we come back and remember that we will make sure that God stays centered in everything because we have a tendency to get a lot of ourselves mixed up in the things God wants to do.

Sheila: So true. I've noticed a couple of comments on my Facebook page the other night. Basically, the kind of thread was, "When we get through this then I'll worship God again and then I'll be grateful." But you address that in this book, and you talk about worshipping God while you're still in that difficult place.

David: Sheila, one of the things that is just overwhelming, in fact, I sat down with Tobin Davis who is our worship leader and Michael Sanchez who is our worship singer and I told them, I said, "You guys, I've been studying the Psalms over these last weeks and I want to tell you something that has just really got a hold of my heart. That there is no place you can go where there isn't worship and praise."

Last weekend, for instance, I talked about David in the Cave of Adullam and he is there with all of the offscouring of Israel. He is trying to get away from all of his problems and he is stuck down there. At the end of his journey in that cave, he has a time of worship and Psalm 57 is the text of that worship. It's the source of the hymn that we sing, "I exalt you. I exalt you, O Lord!" I can't imagine that. How did he do that? In the midst of the misery he was in, he praised God.

But I'm learning more and more that that's not just accidental, it's on purpose. God wants us to learn that no matter what's going on around us we can still lift up our hands in praise to him. And when we do, he's honored, and we're helped. And that's a really good lesson

to learn.

Sheila: What have you seen God do in the midst of this pandemic?

David: You know what? Let me just tell you some things that have happened. First of all, when we began to speak on... well, we actually record and speak on Saturday night and it's aired on Sundays, we just started having whole bunches of people come to Christ. The numbers are now somewhere close to 3,000 people who have indicated in their response to us that they have received Jesus Christ as their Savior. And of course, I hear people say, "Well, you know all those people didn't really trust Christ." I don't know if they did or not but let's say half of them did, that's still a lot.

I always tell these people... here's what I tell them, Sheila. All my life I've heard people say, "You know those people that go down in front in the Billy Graham crusades? Not all of those people are getting saved."

I say, "You know what? That may be true but everywhere I go I just run into people that got saved at a Billy Graham crusade." I think a lot of people have come to Christ during this time when they've been isolated in their house and they've watched and listened to the Word of God. And the Holy Spirit has gotten a hold of them and changed their lives. We're going to hear a lot of those stories going forward. I think another thing...

Go ahead. I'm sorry.

Sheila: No! Go ahead.

David: I think another thing that happened to us is we decided we wanted to try to help the people in our community and we started a food program. Every Friday we have been feeding 1,000 people. We've been giving them boxes of food and produce and milk and bread. It's really had a great impact upon our community. But more than that, it's had an enormous impact on our people who've come voluntarily and given their Friday

afternoons to distributing food. And now they're coming on Thursdays to pack the boxes because we're doing it all now ourselves.

The Bible says we're to love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves and we're getting to do that in ways that we weren't doing it before.

Sheila: That's beautiful! That's a powerful, powerful thing. There is a little video on your Facebook page. Really, it is the introduction to *Shelter in God*, and it is one of the most powerful things that I have seen because you basically talk about throughout scripture what God does when he shelters his people in place. Tell us about putting that video together.

David: Well, I had a lot of people say to me during this time, "Dr. J, what do you think is going to happen after this is over?" Of course, I don't know what they think I am. I tell them that I'm not a prophet nor the son of the prophet even though I have a prophet's name.

But the thing I began to realize as I started to think through this. I did this one night late at night. I was lying in bed thinking about it. How many times in the Bible it appears that God sheltered people. He took them aside and I began to make a list of them like Noah and the ark, and David in Chaldea, and all the different things all through the Bible. Then there is like 25 of them. I chose the most powerful ones and ended up with Almighty God sheltering his son in a tomb for three days and he came out to bring salvation to the world.

The interesting thing but all of this was wherever there was a sheltering, the aftermath was something special. Like God sheltered Jonah in a whale and when he came out, he went to Nineveh and preached the greatest revival that's recorded in history. Over and over again that's what happens.

So at the end of it I said, "I don't know what God is going to do but I do know what he's

done, and I think he might do it again." And that's what happened. And you're right about that video, it just went viral.

Here's the coolest thing about it. I have a friend in India named Satish Kumar and he's the pastor of a Calvary Church in Hyderabad, which is, if not the largest, one of the largest churches in the world. Now I preached for him last year. First time ever in my life, probably the only time, I preached to 100,000 people in one day.

Sheila: Wow!

David: They have five services beginning at 5:30 in the morning and they fill every space. It's just one of the most amazing things I've ever seen. Well, he called me in and said, "Hey! You know that little video? It's going viral in India!"

I said, "Oh my goodness! How great is that?"

So those are some of the things that happen during a time like this. God does things so totally out of the box that you can't even express it.

Sheila: And people, if you haven't watched it yet, you need to go to Dr. Jeremiah's, is it on the Turning Point page?

David: Well, you can get it on YouTube. If you want to get it the best way just go to *Shelter in God*, David Jeremiah or *Shelter in God*, YouTube and it will pop up. It's there and you can watch it. Its four minutes and 50 seconds.

Sheila: Four minutes... There's not a lot of good news out there these days but it's so inspirational, uplifting -- it's fantastic.

I have to be honest with you. For the first two weeks of this "shelter in place" I stayed in my pajamas and binge watched the great British baking show on Netflix. And then I

began to realize that I could just survive during this time or that we could redeem the time. I just wondered, what do you have to say to people who are at home and they're just lonely? They just feel cut off and lonely.

David: You're talking about staying in your pajamas. I read about one guy who said he had his daytime pajamas and his nighttime pajamas. I know a lot of people have done that. At first, I think we all didn't know exactly how to do it. But I found out pretty quickly if I was going to survive emotionally and mentally, I needed a schedule for every day. I needed to work harder planning my day, how I was going to spend it, what I was going to do. And Donna and I worked together at that. We didn't do it perfectly. I'll tell you the truth, as you know, Sheila, going to the store was a big deal at the first. How do you plan that? How do you get food? So we tried to structure our day with meaning.

I remember one day, everything was closed down and we had shelter fever. So we just got in the car and we drove as far up the coast as we could and then turned around and drove back. It was really life giving to us just to do that. But you can't just -- you have to take control of this because if you don't it will take control of you.

Sheila: Yeah. I think that's such a word of wisdom. That when we don't have a schedule or we don't plan, it's just very easy to get discouraged. I wondered, what do you hope when readers have finished reading *Shelter in God*, what do you hope that they take from this book?

David: Well, we're hearing a lot of people say today, Sheila, that nothing like this has ever happened. Nobody has ever gone through anything like this before. Oh yes, they have. When you read the things that David experienced and then you read what he wrote when he was going through those things, you'll discover that you have a friend in the Psalms you didn't know you had before.

Here's what I've learned about the Psalms that are so critical for us. The Psalms, it's a hymn book, obviously. It's the hymns of the Old Testament written primarily by David.

But it is more than a hymn book. It is a journal. And the thing about the Psalms that make them really come alive, as you know from reading some of the chapters, is when you can take the history of what's going on in David's life and then take the Psalm that he wrote and put it in the right place, you can see what was he going through when he wrote what he wrote.

What you discover is that David is very honest about his problems. I know a lot of people say, "Well, why should I tell God my problems? He already knows what they are." But God tells us to cast our burdens on him and there is a reason for that. When we spell out to him in Technicolor what's going on in our heart, first of all, we become very specific, it's very healing, and it's very biblical because that's what David did. When you read the Psalms, he doesn't try to hide the issues he's going through. He makes them very, very available to all of his readers. And then you can watch him work through his problems and he comes... Somebody once told me, every Psalm starts with a sigh and it ends with a song. It's true! That's pretty much the way it is.

Sheila: As you know, I love everything you write but I cannot tell you how I've been helped by this particular book, *Shelter in God*, simply because you help us see what was going on in David's life. That makes the Psalm, I'll never read Psalm 46 again the same way, Psalm 120; you give context and it just gives great encouragement.

So I'm going to let our viewers know how they can get a hold of their own copy of this book and get one for a friend. But one of the things we're very passionate about here at *LIFE Today* is putting, as you talked about with feeding your community, we want to put hands and feet to our faith. So our commitment this year is that we're going to drill 350 water wells around the world. We've already been able to put in 200, we've still got 150 water wells to go. And so that's something. We're about to show a video to our viewers of one of our trips to Africa and the difference that they can make. And then we'll come back, Dr. Jeremiah, let people know how to get your book and say good-bye to you. So I'm just going to ask our viewers to watch this.

On the mission field:

Sheila: In the driest regions of Africa, there is often only one place to find water, deep underground. So deep in fact that it takes two people a full week of digging to reach it. Well, despite their efforts these hand-dug wells aren't deep enough, and the water remains unclean causing widespread illness from waterborne diseases. Recently, we learned of another danger we did not expect.

Open Captions:

>> My daughter went to the hole to get water. She was gone too long, and we began to worry. I went to check on her but only found her bucket. When I looked further down into the hole, I saw my daughter. She had fallen in and drowned.

Sheila: It's an unimaginable tragedy. A mother's worst nightmare! And yet the reality surrounding Merci and her family, the utter lack of safe water sources demands that they live with the risk.

Open Captions:

>> I feel so much pain when I think about what happened to her. It's crippling. And I have so much fear for my other children. If I send them to draw water, will the same thing happen to them?

Sheila: I don't want one more mother to go through what Merci has gone through. But this is something you and I can do something about. This did not need to happen. And that's why we're here. She's not asking for a lot. She's just looking for a place to send her children to actually get for the first time in their lives clean water.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: I will never as long as I live forget Merci. When she first spoke to us about the horror, I can't imagine. Your child has gone out for something simple, "I'm going to get some water" and they don't come back, and they don't come back and something in your gut as a mom knows something is wrong. And so you walk to that well and there's a bucket. And she looked in and there's her precious little girl drowned.

I asked Merci where her daughter was buried, and she said it was fairly close to the village. And I asked if she had been back there since she buried her daughter and she said, "No, it's overwhelming." And we talked for a while and then she gave me this amazing privilege. She said, "Would you walk with me to where my daughter is buried?"

And I'll never forget that walk. I mean, Janice who takes all of our photographs was with us and at one point, we literally had to hold Merci up because the closer she got to that little mound it was just overwhelming. I knelt with her there and we wept together. That should never happen to another mother. One of the things that Merci said was, "If from this devastating tragedy of losing my daughter, if somehow you get the word back and we're able to get a well, no other mother will have to go through this."

You've been really faithful. I'm so grateful. James and Betty are so grateful for the way you've helped us in the past, but the need is great right in the moment. I know you have your own worries and your own concerns. Many things are difficult in life but can you imagine what it would be like to A: Lose a child through them falling into a well, but B: Knowing that there is as great a chance that that very water would take their life.

Our commitment for this year was 350 wells. You've helped us put in 200 wells. Thank you! But we've still got 150 to go. We want to meet our commitment to the people on the ground who are trusting us. If you give more, we'll put more wells in.

So here's how you can help. \$48 will give clean water to ten people for their life. Some of you could do \$144, maybe you're a Sunday school class -- do it together. \$144 would give clean water for 30 people for life! And if you're able to, maybe you own a business

and God has blessed you, \$4800 would put a well in a village that would give 1,000 people clean water for their life.

They're not asking for a lot. Would you please go to the phone, dial that number, go online, and give the very best gift possible? Let's give life and let's give it in Jesus' name.

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

On the mission field:

Ralph: I travel all over the world as the director of Missions for *LIFE Today*. I continue to hear some of the same stories -- death. Why? Simply because they don't have clean drinking water.

These mothers who wanted to give life to her children, she wanted to bring health to her family by bringing water home, but she ends up bringing contaminated water -- if she can find any! And it brings death to her children. None of us would ever want to bring death into our living room but that's what these mothers did. They didn't want to do that. They didn't mean to do that. But either they can't find water or the water they do have is so contaminated it just brings disease, and even to the point of death.

So please help us bring clean water. Let's drill some wells that will give these villages and these people water for the rest of their lives. Clean, life-giving water! Please help us today.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much for watching that video. Thank you for calling in. If the lines

are busy, please keep calling. These people are not asking for a lot. They just want to be able to give their children clean water. It makes such a difference.

And for any gift at all, we will be thrilled to send you Dr. David Jeremiah's new book, *Shelter in God: Your Refuge in Times of Trouble*. Honestly, I think it's one of the best things you've ever written, Dr. J. And I just want to say thank you so much. Thank you for studying the Word of God throughout your whole life and for breaking it open to those of us who are hungry to know God more. We're so grateful to you.

David: I'm very grateful for the opportunity to point people to what I know is the best news there is in any time, even in times like this and that's the unchanging Word of God.

Sheila: Amen! Well, thanks for watching. We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*!