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Week 39: Christmas Shoes and Smiles: Last week

Sheila Walsh

"Power in the Names of God" #1

Sheila: Hi! I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I want you to know that we never take it for granted that you tune in and that you watch the program and the way you participate with us in so many of our different ministries. It really makes a difference and we're so grateful.

I was thinking the other day, I came across a child's copy of a Pilgrim's Progress. I opened it up and I realized that I actually bought it when we knew we were expecting a child, but we didn't know whether we're having a boy or a girl. Yet I wanted to write a message in the beginning of the book to basically tell this little one that life is a journey. And even once you give your life to Christ, life is a journey.

But I remember when we went for our ultrasound and the technician said, "Well, do you want to know the sex of the baby?"

And we said, "Well, yeah, we do but we know it's a girl. We're going to call her Alexandra."

And she said, "Yeah, well, I don't think he's going to like that."

So we called him "Christian" which was perfect to write at the beginning of his book when that's the journey of Christian towards the celestial city.

But it made me think a lot of the importance of the names of God in this season because in these days everything is unsettled, everything is being shaken and we're not sure what

we can absolutely count on anymore. But what I do know for sure is that we can trust 100% in who God is and the names of God that have been revealed to us. He is the same yesterday, today, wherever you are, and he will be the same tomorrow.

I love what one of my favorite commentators wrote. Warren Wiersbe writes this: "The safest place in all the world is in the will of God and the safest protection in all the world is the NAME of God. When you know his NAME, you know his nature. His NAMES and titles reveal his nature. They tell us who he is and what he can do. Each NAME he bears is a blessing he bestows on us."

Well, in a recent study that I was doing I realized in Psalm 23 there are 11 of the names of God in this one Psalm alone. Isn't that amazing? Eleven descriptions of who our father is. So I thought I'd share some of those with you today.

So let's start at the beginning: *The Lord is my shepherd. Jehovah-Raah, the Lord is my shepherd.*

That's one of the most powerful and personal names of God. Shepherds in Israel love their sheep. Each one had its own name. And the shepherd would go ahead of them to make sure the path was clear, that there was no danger ahead. But at night he would count each one to make sure that no one was missing. Then when they were gathered into the pen at night he would sleep over the opening.

I love that picture because the message is clear, if you want to get to the sheep, you'll have to come through me. And that's who Christ is for each one of us who have trusted in him. In fact, that's how Jesus describes himself in John chapter 10, verse 11. Jesus said, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep."* And again in verses 14-15, *"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and they know me just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep."*

It's not simply that he leads us each moment of each day; that he watches over us. So

much more! He gave us own life for us. So that's the first name of God in that Psalm: Jehovah-Raah, the Lord is my shepherd.

Then the Psalm goes on: *"I have all that I need."* Or some translations, *"I shall not want."* That's Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord is my provider.

It is easy to read that simply as our daily needs; that that's what that name means but it is so much deeper. And honestly, for me, life-changing. The first time that Jehovah-Jireh is used is in Genesis chapter 22. I have to say, when I was a young mom, it was one of the hardest stories for me to read. Abraham and Sarah had longed for a child for so many years. It seemed absolutely impossible as the years went on.

But then God intervened. Sarah was 90 years old when she gave birth to their promised son, Isaac. I can't even fathom that! She was 90 and Abraham was 100.

But then you might remember, Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Do you remember that story? Can you even imagine? We don't know exactly how old Isaac was at the time, but trusted biblical scholars agree that he wasn't a little boy. I've seen pictures of like Abraham picking up a little boy to put him down on a stone to be sacrificed. No! He was anywhere between 20 and 30 years of age. He had to be strong enough to carry enough wood up a mountain to fully consume a human body.

Now why did Abram do that? Because he had been promised that through this one son his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. Well, the bottom line is that Abram trusted God. And the other thing that blows me away was Isaac trusted his father. I mean Isaac was a strong strapping man. Abram must have asked his son to lay down, and he did. Well, God was testing Abram to see if he truly trusted that promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars through this boy.

Well, you probably remember Abram raised up his knife and at the last moment God stopped him. And then Abram saw a ram whose horns were caught in the thicket. And

we read in Genesis 22, verse 14: Abraham named the place Jehovah-Jireh, which means the Lord will provide.

That name means so much more than we think. No matter what you are facing today Christ is the ultimate provision. When we were lost, we couldn't save ourselves. Christ gave his life for us. He is Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord, my provider.

The Psalm moves on: *"He lets me rest in green meadows." Or some translations, "He leads me besides peaceful streams." He is Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord, my peace.*

Well, the first time that name appears in the Bible is in the book of judges. Israel is under brutal attack from their enemies. We read that the angel of the Lord appeared to a young man, Gideon and announced to him that he was a mighty warrior and he would deliver his people from their enemies.

Well, Gideon was horrified! I mean he was the youngest in his family, from the smallest tribe in Israel and he was actually hiding when the angel found him. Well, Gideon is so shaken by this message that he wants a sign that the messenger is really from God. So he asked the angel, not realizing that it is actually an Old Testament appearance of Christ, "the angel of the Lord." So he asks the angel to wait where he is until he can come back with a meal.

Now how long would that take? Well, he didn't come back with a pizza. He cooked a whole goat. I mean how long would that have taken? Well, he came back with the meal: The goat, bread, and a pot of broth. And the angel of the Lord is waiting under a tree. And he tells Gideon to put the goat and the bread on a stone and then pour the broth over it. Well, Christ touched the meal with the tip of his staff and fire consumed it all. And then the angel the Lord disappeared.

When Gideon realizes he's actually seen the angel of the Lord he is absolutely convinced he is going to die. But the Lord speaks to him and tells him, "No, Gideon. You are not

going to die." So Gideon built an altar and he named it Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord is my peace.

Life as you well know is crazy right now. It can feel like our enemy is way too big for us to handle but then we remember that Christ is our peace and he has promised his peace to every single one of us who placed our trust in him. Do you remember in John chapter 14, verse 27, Jesus told his closest friends, *"I'm leaving you with a gift -- peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."*

If you find yourself in these days worrying, your mind's just going over and over imagining all the negative scenarios. Your heart is hurting because you don't know exactly what's going to happen. Just pause for a moment and call on Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord is my peace.

The Psalm moves on: *"He renews my strength."* Some translations say, *"He restores my soul."* He is Jehovah-Raphe, the Lord my healer.

That word *Raphe* means the Lord is my healer physically and spiritually. Now the thing that's fascinating about this is unlike Jehovah-Jireh or Jehovah-Shalom, where God's people give him a name, this name is revealed by God himself. He revealed this name to the children of Israel. He told them that he is Jehovah-Raphe after they crossed the red sea. He was establishing with his people a new way for his people to live, to separate them from other nations around them.

We read that in Exodus 15:26. *He said, "If you will listen carefully to the sound of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians for I am the Lord who heals you."*

I don't know what you need right now but Jehovah-Raphe will renew your strength,

restore your soul, and bring healing where there has been brokenness.

The Psalm moves along. *"He guides me along right paths bringing honor to his name."*
Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord of righteousness.

The prophet, Jeremiah looking ahead prophesying to the day that Jesus, our Messiah would come to save his people, he wrote in chapter 33 verses 15 through 16: "In those days and at that time I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. In that day Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this will be its name: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'" Jehovah-Tsidkenu.

Now if I was going to write a hymn using one of the names of God, I don't think Jehovah-Tsidkenu would be the one I'd choose -- hard to rhyme! But the great Scottish pastor, Robert Murray M'Cheyne wrote a hymn celebrating his own unfolding understanding of this great name of God. Let me just share a couple of verses with you. Remember, he wrote it in 1600 and something, I think. You can go check. You can Google it.

But here's what he said: *"I once was a stranger to grace and to God, I knew not my danger, and felt not my load; though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree, Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me. When free grace awoke me by light from on high, then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die; no refuge, no safety in self could I see -- Jehovah Tsidkenu, my Savior must be. My terrors all vanished before that sweet name; my guilty fears banished, with boldness I came to drink at the fountain, life-giving and free -- Jehovah Tsidkenu is all thing to me."*

I love that truth. I don't know your life story. Some of you are kind enough to write and share a little of your story with me. And several of you have told me that you watch our program either when I'm here or when James and Betty are hosting, and you watch us from a prison cell. The truth is setting you free. But I don't know where you're at today. I

don't know what's going on in your life. Sometimes we get disappointed with ourselves.

I read a statistic recently that during the Pandemic of 2020 about percent of pastors are considering leaving their calling; great discouragement, not sure what's going on. And sometimes I get letters from young girls or even from women my own age talking about the fact that they feel like they have let God down; that they meant to live one way and they feel as if they've not lived up to that.

But I just want to remind you no matter what you've done, no matter where you are today, no matter how often you have failed, when you have Christ as your Savior, when you have learned the power of confessing your sin and being forgiven, then he is your righteousness. Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord is my righteousness.

I don't want to take it for granted that just because you've stayed with the program for a few minutes that you know this Jesus. Somebody said to me, "I don't think I'm really a Christian, but I do go to church." I think gosh, wouldn't it be sad to know the building and never know the builder?

Do you know that right now you could begin a relationship with Christ? That all of these great names of our God: Shepherd, healer, peace, you can know those in your own life right now? God knows everything that you've ever done.

One of my friends once asked me a question. She said, "Sheila, if you went to a movie theatre and instead of the regular movie playing, what they said was, "Today, we've decided to show a movie of your life -- everything! Everything you've ever said, everything you've ever done.' How would you feel?"

Let me ask you that question if suddenly everything was up there on a screen for anyone to watch? The things you've never told anyone else about. The things that you think well, it's not technically a sin because I just thought about it a lot, I didn't do it. But suddenly everyone could see it. The great news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is he's seen your

movie and he loves you. And all you have to do, it's simple, the Bible says if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

All you have to say is -- and you can do it wherever you are -- Lord Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner. I believe that you died, I believe you rose again, and I want to give my life to you. And like that, your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life and you will never be alone one moment of one day for the rest of your life. You will know Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord is my righteousness. It's the greatest thing you could ever do.

One of the other things that we love to do here is because of the love of Christ that's been shared with us, we want to share it with others. I want to ask you to watch something and I'm going to tell you how you can put some smiles on some faces. Watch this.

On the mission field:

Announcer: The sounds of children running and playing and having a good time often give way to sounds of pain and suffering because they have never had a pair of shoes to protect their feet.

Janice: Is he saying something? It's pain -- it's paining. Oh my gosh!

I'm in a village in Angola and came upon this child. This little boy is Augusto, and this breaks my heart. His little feet are in some of the worse shape I've ever seen. There were many in this village with horrible conditions on their feet.

Announcer: As our mission teams travel throughout the world, they see the unsanitary conditions that children like Augusto must cope with. Conditions that can lead to a lifetime of misery simply because their feet are not protected.

Janice: They're completely infected. He said there are insects that have gotten into his feet. I'll be surprised if he doesn't lose his toe. Disease comes in through their feet and just goes throughout their body. It can actually kill them.

Announcer: Augusto's condition is not unique. Thousands of children suffer every day from painful injuries or infestations such as hookworms that enter their bare feet. This can lead to diseases that cause chronic blood loss that leads to anemia, malnutrition, and sometimes, even death.

Janice: Please! Do what you can. Help bring shoes to little children like Augusto all over the world. You can be a part of something big and something even fun. But this is the reason we do it.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: What a precious boy! I know if he lived next door to you and you discovered that he didn't have shoes, he would have them within 15 minutes. You would make sure of it. Well, that's one of the wonderful things about this outreach. We get to pair little boys like Augusto with people who love Jesus like you and make a difference.

This is the last week of *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*. We've made a commitment to be able to send 150,000 pairs of shoes to children around the world who are desperately in need. But this is one of the campaigns I love because there is an entry level for all of us. For \$36 you can provide shoes for ten children! Think about that! I don't know the last time you tried to buy shoes for your child, but the prices are astronomical.

When we answer this prayer and fulfill this need, I mean with \$36 you're putting shoes on the feet of ten little ones like Augusto. Some of you can do a little more, \$72 will give 20 pairs of shoes. And you might say, "Well, why are you asking at this time of the year for Christmas shoes?" It's because we've made a commitment to get all the funds in that

we need to be able to make sure that they are there in time for Christmas. For \$180 you can provide shoes for 50 children.

It might be a good idea as a family to decide, this Christmas we're going to cut out just one gift so that we can give a gift that will impact so many lives. We call it "Christmas Shoes and Smiles" because children born in countries where they have cleft lip or cleft palate and they can't get help are so often looked as if they've been cursed by God and they can't eat properly, they can't get nutrition. They're shunned by people. \$500 provides a corrective surgery for one child. If some of you have been really blessed this year, \$1,000 will give shoes to 275 children or it will provide two surgeries.

Would you do something? This is the last week. We don't want to disappoint these children. James and Betty have made a commitment to work with the best people on the planet who are caring for children, who are very careful with finances. And we've made a commitment, we'll send 150,000 pairs of shoes. And we can only do it if you'll join with us and help us.

This is, as I said, our last week. So if you've been thinking about it but maybe just put it off, decide to do it today. Decide today that you're going to put a big smile on a lot of children's faces and some healing on their feet because that's all we're asking. We're just asking if you will do your part and I do my part then what a beautiful Christmas it will be! Will you call now? Give the best gift amount you possibly can.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water, but also from a lack of things we often take for granted like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and disease

that could lead to crippling consequences and even death.

By responding today, you will help secure and make ready 150,000 Christmas shoes to be shipped and delivered to children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request this beautifully crafted blue crystal shoe ornament. A treasure to display at each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may also request this keepsake boxed set of all *LIFE's* Christmas shoe ornaments.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft lip or palate surgeries. And you may request the beautiful "A Mother's Strength" bronze sculpture.

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

End of video

On the mission field:

Isak: I've got to tell you what a happy day this is for me. I'm here with 20 kids who have all received shoes today because someone like you was generous enough to say I'll give \$72. Or maybe two of you gave \$36 and that gift of \$36 meant that ten or \$72 meant that 20 children got shoes here today.

What that would mean is you would extend this line just that much further. You would extend the expression of God's heart and his hands to these children and you would extend the joy in villages just like this by giving these children the precious gift of a pair of shoes.

Please do it today. Get online or dial that number on your screen and give -- give a gift, an extra-special-above-normal gift that is the gift of shoes, the gift of joy.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Great opportunity, isn't it? I love when Jesus said, "I was naked, and you clothed me." There's a spiritual truth there that when we put shoes on the feet of a child, we're actually giving them to Jesus. And for any gift at all, we will send you this darling little shoe. Our shoe this year is a blue, kind of cobalt blue crystal. If you're able to give \$100 then we'll give you the boxed set, which has this year's shoe and shoes from three previous years. And then when you see it on your tree it is a reminder not only that you've been able to give but a reminder to pray for those children. So I want to thank you. Remember this is our last week so please, call today and remember that we love you here. We'll see you next time!