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Week 45: Fall Mission Feeding

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Mission special #1

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh, here with Randy Robison. Today we have something really important to share with you. So I'm grateful that you are here. And maybe you'll even want to go and text a couple of friends and say, "Let's join in this. Something really important is going to be happening here."

As a mom, I cannot think of anything that would have been harder than to put my child to bed knowing that they were hungry. That's something that your mom and dad, that James and Betty have been very aware of and working to resolve for how many years now, Randy?

Randy: It's been over 30 years now. The thing about mission feeding that I love is that we know it works. We have the people in place, we have the systems in place, we have the experience to go into an area and take a very serious situation where children are suffering, where children are malnourished, where parents are having a hard time taking care of the crops and the sick children at the same time. We go in with this emergency food relief that we call "mission feeding" and it completely transforms a community.

We've seen this, Sheila. I know you've seen it, I've seen it. We went from one place on a fairly recent trip where it was very, very dire in a community, a village. In fact, we got there, they were having a funeral for a girl who had died from some complications that result from malnutrition. And then we traveled not too far into an area with the feeding program and we saw children laughing. We saw children sitting in classes learning. This is the long-term solution to a short term problem.

But right now we have a very serious situation. Sheila, we got a call from Isak Pretorius, our mission partner in Africa and he sent us some footage. We've been consumed with our own situation here and understandably so, but there are things going on in the world right now that need our attention. And as a Christian, as a believer, as a part of the church, Sheila, I know we should be the hands and feet of Christ and reach out into these areas.

Sheila: And you know, 2020 as you say, Randy is a year that has brought a lot of heartache, a lot of challenges for so many people. But can you imagine what it would be like to be a mom in a village where already you've buried some of your children? Already your children are starving, already you're putting them to bed with an empty tummy but now on top of that, you have this pandemic that is impacting so many around the world.

So Isak sent us some fresh footage just so that we could take a look at what's actually going on right now. So please, would you watch this?

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every morning families in rural villages throughout Africa wake up wondering what will today bring--floods, civil unrest, a pandemic? Unfortunately, mothers in South Sudan and Angola live with these realities each and every day.

Isak: The conditions that we're seeing here in Africa at the moment are just devastating. Not only are we facing the issues of drought in certain of the countries where we're operating, and then in places like South Sudan now we're suddenly seeing the effects of flooding. We've literally have had to leave food in our warehouses. And our staff are bringing boats into the warehouses and filling the boats with food and then taking them out from there to get to other people.

In Angola right now we're seeing our malnutrition clinics fuller than they've ever been. And yet, on top of all of that, we now have this COVID pandemic that is caused such a significant additional impact on the children who we're so desperately trying to keep alive and to serve.

Announcer: No matter what a mother faces, her overriding concern remains, will I be able to feed my child today? Now, even in the midst of a pandemic our mission teams bravely risk their lives to provide that answer. People might say, "Well, how is COVID effecting? Are the people getting the virus? Are they dying from the virus? Yes! That's happening to an extent but the reality is far more children will die as a result of food insecurity. Far more children will die from malnutrition, from poverty related issues around food and access to food than what will even die from the pandemic. Way more!

And that is the reality of what we're facing on the ground here. We cannot save the lives in this clinics. We cannot protect these families and we cannot be a lifeline to these children unless you open your hearts today, partner with us. Give the best gift that you can give--give the gift of life by giving the gift of food.

End of video

In the studio:

Randy: We don't know how long this pandemic is going to impact us and our world but we do know that we will continue to go into these areas with the food relief. We will not stop. Nothing will stop us. We've faced wars, we've faced droughts and floods and COVID-19. We are committed to helping people. Because Sheila, that is the gospel, saving lives is critical to being the church.

Sheila: It is funny. I was just reading this morning in Isaiah. This is Isaiah chapter 59, it says this in verse ten, actually Isaiah 58, verse ten: Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

It doesn't get much clearer than that. When we, as the body of Christ are alive on this planet we cannot turn a blind eye to those who are suffering, to those who are broken, to those who are praying right now that God will hear their prayers and send some help. And that's been our

passion here for over 30 years.

Randy: It is! And my dad has a great saying. He says if you want an answer to your prayer, be an answer to someone else's prayer. You know--you know right now that there are people in desperate situations. Whether it is the ones who are fleeing the violence in South Sudan or other parts of Africa where they are praying, Lord, send me something. I need to feed my child. They're doing everything they can. They're working hard. But they need an answer to that prayer.

I believe that you and I are the answer to that prayer. It is as simple as you joining with us in mission feeding, going to the phone, going on line, making the best gift you can.

Just to give you an idea of how effective our mission feeding program is, you can feed three children for three months for a gift of \$30. That goes to the way we do things. We have worked very hard over the years so that a little can do a lot. Three children for \$30. Five children for \$50! Ten children for \$100! It just takes all of us stepping up and saying, you know what? I'll do my part. Whatever God has enabled you to do is what we would ask you to do. And Sheila, we know that when we partner together we make a difference.

Sheila: I will never forget my first trip to Angola, walking in a malnutrition clinic and seeing these darling little ones who almost, they almost didn't have the energy to cry. They were using every last ounce of strength they had simply to take the next breath. I remember sitting down on the bed beside one of the moms. The thing that struck me was you know, some of them, in God's economy, I happened to be born in Scotland into a family where they were able to provide food and clothing and shelter. And as I sat beside this one mom and I looked in her eyes and I looked at her little one, I thought, there is no difference! We're both mothers who would give our lives for our children.

And so little, as Randy says, makes such a huge difference. \$30, we can use that like that just going out for lunch or grabbing a few designer coffees. \$30 would feed three children for three months. Let me let you see the need.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Perhaps the greatest fear of parents concerns the health of their children. It is especially true in Africa. Adriano is a godly father in Angola who wants to pride in his ability to provide for his family. But tragedy has changed that.

Open Captions:

>> We lost our two children and it's like we lost part of us. That's why we're working, but not with full power.

Announcer: Adriano told us food and health are two critical issues in his community. You see when parents take care of sick children, there is little time to farm and produce food. But without food children's immune systems become weak and more susceptible to disease. It's a vicious cycle.

Sheila: When you look at a little one like this. This little one's name is Balvine Natula. This color of hair, this red hair means that the body has stopped sending nutrients to the hair. So there is no protein. These are terrible sights. And it's why mission feeding is absolutely vital for us. We want to be able to get to where help is needed now, and help is needed now in these villages to feed their bodies so that they have strength that we can feed their souls and spirits. You can't hear that Jesus loves you when you are starving to death.

End of video**In the studio:**

Sheila: If we were able to move that family next door to you, you would do everything in your power to save the life of that child and to give that mother hope. That's the beauty of mission feeding. We can bring this family right into your home and sit that mother down beside you with that darling child in her lap and show you that you can change the life of so many people with so little.

2020 can be looked back on as a year of disaster and it's certainly been that. Wouldn't it be

amazing if 2020 was marked by the year the church stood up, the church woke up and said, "If this is happening we can do something and we can do something now."

We've made it possible for every single one of us and of you to find a place where you can enter. As Randy said, \$30, feeding three children for three months! We could all do that. Some of you are able to give more, and if you can then do that. Let's look back on 2020 and remember that God took the blinders off our eyes and unstopped our ears so we could hear those cries and respond in Jesus' name, Randy.

Randy: Absolutely! And as mission feeding goes forward from 2020 to 2021 we're going to continue to make a difference by taking emergency food into these situations.

Sheila, I saw you in that clinic and it reminded me of one little girl that we saw in a clinic. And that morning she was sitting up, but she had all the signs of malnutrition. Her skin particularly, you could just tell that the malnutrition had taken its toll. We went back to the clinic in the afternoon after visiting some places and she had been moved to another room and put on an I.V.

I knelt there and I prayed for that child. I asked the mother to pray with me. She said actually that she had quit praying. And that's so hard to hear but it's the reality in those places where these people are hurting so deeply. I prayed for that little girl and I expected, I went to Oral Roberts University, and he taught me to expect a miracle. And I do! I do! But when I went back the next day that little girl had died that night.

We were too late for her. But let me tell you there are so many that we can be there for. We can be on time if you will partner with us right now. We can save many, many lives. \$100 will help feed ten children for three months. \$1,000 will feed 100 children. Let me tell you, there are so many beautiful precious children right now that we can reach out to. We can be the hands and feet of Jesus. We can be the expression of the gospel, a savior who came to give us life--what better way to express that than by literally giving life to these children.

So I hope you'll go to your phone, go online right now. I am proud, honored to be a part of an

organization that can ask you to help. That's what I'm asking you to do right now. Give the best gift you can because I'm here to tell you, we are committed here. My parents paved the way many years ago and continue to be active in the outreaches of life. And Sheila and I, we are right now saying to you that we are committed--we are committed to reaching out and saving lives.

Sheila: And it is not too late. You think isn't it too late? No! From the first bowl of food, you turn them from death to life. And we can do this.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today on top of the daily fight for life and food, families and children across Africa are now forced to deal with the challenges of a global health crisis. Because of COVID-19 food scarcity has increased drastically and the fear of dying from lack of food is far greater than the virus itself.

Even in these unprecedented times, mission feeding won't stop. With your help, mission feeding will continue to be a daily source of food, encouragement, and health for the 350,000 children counting on us.

Call now with your lifesaving 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 *40 Days of Healing Promises*. This beautiful hardcover devotional will encourage you in your faith as you dive deep into the healing promises that are yours in Jesus' name.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the "Blessings for your Home" bowls and tea towel set. This set of bowls and two beautifully designed tea towels will make a wonderful addition to your home and serve as a reminder of your help in blessing others as a friend of *LIFE*.

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

On the mission field:

Isak: You might have heard me refer before to malnutrition as "the silent killer." That's because it comes like a thief in the night and it steals a child's life away silently, many times an unknown and nameless child. Another small little grave but a life--a life that is lost because of something that we can so simply solve. A life stolen away simply because there wasn't enough food.

The desperation you can see written all over this child because this little body is fighting a fight that chances are, they'll probably lose--a fight of life and death.

It is a tragedy of epic proportion because one in 200,000 of these children die each and every month on the continent of Africa. And it can actually be changed pretty simply. If we can get to these villages where this child comes from and we can get mission feeding into those villages, what we're able to ensure is that we wind that clock back. We retell that story. Instead of going to bed without a meal that day that child goes to bed having received an orange bowl filled with the most nutritious food, nourishing its body and saving its life.

That's why we say mission feeding saves lives because it does! But mission feeding doesn't happen just by us being here. Saving this child's life doesn't happen because of us. It happens because of you. Please do whatever you can do and give the very best gift that you can give today. Give the gift of life.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: I know that is hard to watch. I understand that. But it is a lot harder to be the mother

watching that child. It's a lot harder when you have already lost a child.

On one of the trips I had the privilege to go and to look at some of where these little graves were. And the thing that really touched me was that moms and dads had left just whatever they had as a little memento to say my child was here. My child lived. Sometimes it was an empty water bottle or a little shoe, just something to mark the fact "This was my child and they mattered."

I'm just asking you, in the name of Jesus, to allow the Lord to open your heart to see that this is not hopeless. There are some situations in the world where there is...an earthquake happens and you think, there is nothing we could have done. This is something we can do something about and we can do it now.

Our partners are amazing. They are on the ground right now and I remember, Randy, something your mom said, "We pray that the line of the children waiting for food is never longer than the bowls of food we have." Some of you have helped us tremendously in the past and we ask you to continue. Some of you have watched, now we're asking will you jump in and help us?

Randy: And you know Sheila, when we surpassed 200,000 deaths in the United States from the pandemic there was a weight, I think that all of us felt and I know in other countries around the world you felt it too. Did you catch what Isak said there?

Sheila: Each month!

Randy: Each month over 200,000 children, or somewhere around there, are dying in Africa--every month from malnutrition! That's a weight--the number is so big that it is actually hard for me to comprehend.

But here's what I do understand. When we go into a village with the mission feeding program it saves lives as Isak said. And it is not us saving lives, Sheila and I just go and we see and we report back to you what we've seen. It's you! It's you! It is you partnering with us and us being faithful to what God has entrusted us to do. And I'm to tell you the integrity of this ministry, we

do what we say we're going to do.

Sheila: Absolutely! You know what I love about your mom and dad? They never go into situations and say here we are! The big white American saviors. They look to see who is God using in this country and how can we get behind their work and underwrite it? And that to me is just a very honorable way to do ministry.

Randy: Thank you. It is honorable, but let me tell you it is more cost effective, just to be blunt. Because we are looking for every way to get the most out of your support. Because it is critical to us that we not just go in and have big numbers or whatever, it is critical to us that we take what God has entrusted us with, the little that he has entrusted us with and we do a lot with it. That's why for \$30 you can help feed three children for three whole months. \$50 will feed five children for three months. \$100, 10 children--\$1,000 will help feed 100 children for three months. Are you hearing me?

The solution is in our hands--it is in your hands! Will you reach that hand out today and say, I'll give a hand. I'll be the hands and feet of Jesus. I pray you will. Go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. Mission feeding saves lives and we want you to be a part of it.

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Announcer: Today on top of the daily fight for life and food, families and children across Africa are now forced to deal with the challenges of a global health crisis. Because of COVID-19 food scarcity has increased drastically and the fear of dying from lack of food is far greater than the virus itself.

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End of video

On the mission field:

Randy: This is a grave. It is an empty grave. It has no real significance until you put someone in it. Unfortunately, they're putting far too many children into these graves.

Malnutrition is robbing children of their future and robbing families of their joy. They've already dug these graves because they're expecting death. But I have a prayer. I'm expecting life.

So I ask all of you, will you fill a bowl so they don't fill a grave? I hope everyone watching will do the best that they can. Give the best you can because they don't have to be waiting on children to die. We can make that difference. If you'll just go to the phone right now, go online, give the best gift you can and know that when you fill that bowl you give a child hope and life.

End of video

In the studio:

Randy: Those are some precious children! And we need to do something. We can do something. Sheila, that's why I think it is so important that people do just whatever they can to be a part of saving these precious lives.

Sheila: I want to ask you to do something a little different. I want to ask you to make this a family project. Sometimes as parents we just think well, this is a need and I'll write a check and I'll help. I want to ask you to involve your children. We're living in a culture where we've become very selfish and very kind of what makes me feel good. Involve your children. I'll never forget the first time my son saw the red bowls that were needed to feed these children. And he saved up all his pennies and quarters and brought this whole big bag to James. It was his way of--so get your children involved. Make this a project your family prays over and they all contribute.

So for Randy and myself and all of us here at *LIFE Today*, thank you so so much for being Jesus with flesh on right now.