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**Week 16: Rescue Life: Last week**

**Sheila Walsh**

**Remaining in Jesus**

**SHEILA:** I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I just want you to know that we never take it for granted that you watch our programs, that you're part of our family. We love the way that you respond to the different needs that we present. Honestly, behind the scenes here, we talk about it a lot; about how grateful we are for those of you who have been faithful partners for *LIFE Today* for many, many years. And for those of you who are new on our team, then welcome!

One of the things for me that came out of 2020 apart from about probably 15 pounds is this fresh awareness I have of wanting the kind of intimate relationship with the Lord that isn't just a quick prayer in the morning and a Bible reading and then a ton of tie the day together at the end prayer but rather this walking hand in hand with Jesus every minute every day. And the important role that prayer is in all of that.

I've been thinking on the different gifts that prayer offers each one of us. If you think about it, at its root prayer is simply communicating with God and experiencing his presence. Now there's lots of ways we can spend on like worship in which we acknowledge and express gratitude for who God is for the various aspects of his character.

Prayer can also provide a means for confession. It is such a gift confessing our wrongdoing, asking God for forgiveness.

Also, it's a beautiful place for thanksgiving. As we think about the way that God has touched our lives and the blessings we have.

And perhaps, maybe more than anything at times prayer provides an opportunity for us to just lay down our burdens. Just lay it all before the Lord telling God of the pain and the stress, whatever you're going through right now.

I love what Saint Teresa of Avila once said. She said, "Prayer can be an intimate sharing between friends." Don't you love that? That Jesus said, "I don't call you servants, I call you friends."

And in the words of Charles Spurgeon he says that prayer is an astounding spiritual transaction with the creator of heaven and earth.

You know we made a big deal in 2021 that something actually touched down on Mars. And who knows what else is out there? But don't you think that it is amazing that the God who spoke all of that into being wants to talk to us all the time? And I love what Soren Kierkegaard, he wrote that prayer is a powerful way not to influence God but rather to change the nature of the one who prays. That's huge for me. It's not me coming to God with a list of things I want him to do but it's coming into his presence and in his presence then I'm changed. And honestly, which one of us doesn't want to be more like Jesus? And yet, despite all the different gifts that prayer offers, thousands more reasons than I've mentioned, too often we push it to a few moments at the end of the day.

If you have ever felt that your prayers reach no further than the ceiling or maybe you've been praying for something that's gone unanswered for years despite your desperate cries, there is no relief to be found, then you may have come to the conclusion that prayer just doesn't work. But Jesus' example shows that prayer is not just a nice addition to life, but it is vital to our growth as sons and daughters of God.

In the very best-known sermon that Jesus ever preached, it's called "The Sermon on the Mount," he taught his followers what it meant to follow him. He explained to them who would be blessed: The humble, the merciful, the pure in heart. And he explained their

primary mission in life to be salt, to be light, and to love well.

And then he explained to them how to pray. You'll remember this, it is from Matthew Chapter 6. This is what Jesus said, "When you pray don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they'll ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you and pray to your father in private. Then your Father who sees everything will reward you. When you pray don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Pray like this..."

Now when you read that it's not that Jesus is saying when you pray always go into a cupboard and close the door. Perhaps you're part of a small Bible study group and you pray together. That's not what Jesus was speaking about. He was speaking about those who would just simply stand out on the street corners and pray out loud but with no heart at all. The only reason they were doing it was so that people who walked past them would think, oh gosh, what a spiritual man or woman! That's not what Jesus wants. That's not what our Father wants. He wants us to come as we are into his presence. You don't have to clean yourself up. You get to come right now.

But then also in Matthew six we have this beautiful prayer that we call the Lord's Prayer. But if you think about it, it's really our prayer. It was a prayer that was given to Christ's disciples and given to us as followers of Jesus.

This is from the New Living translation. This is how it reads: Our father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation but rescue us from the evil one."

It is as if Jesus was saying to his disciples, "All the other things I've encouraged you to do, love well and extend forgiveness quickly and pursue righteousness at any cost. It can be done only by doing this one thing: pray. And after that, pray some more."

Prayer doesn't change God. It changes us. And it is not about religion, it is about relationship. It always has been. From the first chapter in Genesis all the way to the final revelation given to John, it's always been about God being a loving father.

You'll remember in the Old Testament book in Exodus, after the Israelites had made their escape from Egyptian slavery, God led them on a desert trek that will last a full 40 years. Well, the Israelites, as you probably remember grumbled over this turn of events thinking it would have been better for God to have let them die in Egypt instead of in this hot dusty place. But God, God had different plans in mind, plans that would help the Israelites to learn to trust him for their needs instead of looking to their own will and ways.

But this is how they complained. "You have brought us into this wilderness to starve us all to death," they cried. To which God said to the people's leader, Moses, "Look, I'm going to rain down food from heaven for you. Each day the people can go out and pick up as much food as they need for that day. I will test them in this to see whether or not they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they will gather food and when they prepare it there will be twice as much as usual. I have heard the Israelites complaints. Now tell them, 'In the evening you will have meat to eat, and in the morning, you'll have all the bread you want. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.'"

There is something so deeply personal about that. When you think of the creator of the universe, the one that threw the stars in space, way beyond what we can see at the moment or understand, that that very same God looks at you right now and he knows what you need. He knows the things that are breaking your heart. He knows the things that are bringing you joy. And he cares about your daily needs. To provide fresh bread for them every morning and meat for them in the evening.

Well, Jesus carried on that theme and during the Sermon on the Mount Jesus told his followers not to worry about everyday needs. In the same way that God provided each day's nourishment for the Israelites he would provide for their needs as well.

I love this passage! Jesus said, "Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds!"

Do you ever do that? Do you ever just stand outside and just look at everything God has created? I was sitting out on the balcony a couple of days ago and for whatever reason for once my two dogs were quiet and just sitting at my feet. And then all of the sudden this beautiful red Cardinal, occasionally we see flashes of it going past, but it flew right close to where I was and just sat there, almost as if it was looking at me. I looked at the beauty of the color and just the intricacy that God has put into a little tiny bird.

And that's why Jesus continued by saying, "Look at the birds, they don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your Heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add one single moment to your life? And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs."

And then this beautiful commandment: "Seek the kingdom of God above all else and live righteously and he will give you everything you need." I love that!

Look to me, God was saying to the Israelites, look to the Father. Jesus would later say, trust him. Rely on him. Trust the provision that he alone can bring. "This same God who

takes care of me," the Apostle Paul declared in Philippians 4:19, I believe, "will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus."

Come to him. Pray to him. Ask him for what you need. Do you take time each day just to pause in your Father's presence? And if you go for a walk, do you ever take time just to look up and look at the birds? You know what? Look at the spring flowers when they begin to come up and think, God so beautifully created them but his love for you is so much greater.

You know this habit of looking to God for provision is something the Bible calls "remaining" or "abiding." It's an idea that's at the heart of prayer. I love John 15:16, some of Jesus' final words before he was betrayed and went through a mockery of a trial, and eventually crucified. But he said this, "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you.

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and I my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father."

I think one of the truths that is tucked into that passage is that the more we're in the Lord's presence, the more we want the things that he wants. I've heard people underlining that verse, just anything I want I'll get. So we're praying for a car, a house, whatever! But God wants so much more for us. He wants you to have this rich, vibrant, alive, spiritual life! And that happens when we pray, when we're in his presence, when we stay with him.

The actual Greek word used here for remain is just a little word, *meno*. And it has several meanings. It means to stay in a given place, in relation or expectancy, to abide, to continue to dwell, to endure, to be present, to stand. Literally, to abide in Christ's love. To remain in Christ is not merely to initiate a conversation with God occasionally but rather to keep the lines of communication open with God all the time. We lean in to hear from him moment to moment. We live like plugged into the power source that he alone can provide.

The fact that Jesus exhorts believers to remain in him implies that it is possible to remain in things other than Christ. Sometimes maybe last year was a hard year and sometimes you get stuck in a rut of choosing to remain in anxiety or stress. Other people may choose to remain in habits that tear them down. Some choose to remain in unbelief. But let's make a fresh commitment to remain in Jesus every moment every day.

I don't know whether you just happened to be flicking across channels and thought, well, who's that woman with the funny accent? And maybe you don't normally watch our program and you think, all this talk about a God who loves me, it doesn't look like that to me right now in my life. I want you to know that you are loved by the God who spoke everything into existence. You have never lived an unloved moment in your life. This is not about religion. We don't need any more religion in the world. This is about relationship. It is about a relationship with God who wants to know you.

It's so funny. When I was younger, I was raised in a little Baptist church in Scotland so I would have my quiet time in the morning. And it was something that I did. I would have my quiet time. I'd brush my teeth. I'd have my breakfast. But at this stage of my life, it's not something I do, it's simply who I am. I love the fact that from the moment I wake up until the moment that I finally lay my head down on the pillow at night that I can be in constant conversation with the Lord. And I want that for you too. There's a lot of stressful things going on in our world, but you can talk to God about everything. There is nothing going on that God doesn't know about and that God doesn't care about.

And one of the things that we care very much about here at *LIFE*, and in fact, this is our last week of Rescue Life. I have to tell you, I always hate saying that, that this is the last week, because it is so dear to my heart. The number of young people, young girls, little girls who are trapped in sex trafficking and who feel that nobody cares, nobody hears their prayer, nobody is coming to rescue them. But you and I have the privilege in Jesus' name of going in and reaching them in their villages before they've ever been trafficked, rescuing them when they've ended up in the hand of traffickers and then finding them restored in a relationship with God. I'd love you to help me. So would you watch this and then we'll talk a little bit more?

**On the mission field:**

**Open Captions:**

>> Girls? How old do you want?

>> Young.

>> How old?

>> What's the youngest?

>> Huh?

>> The youngest.

**Don:** We couldn't imagine the extent of the evil that allowed four-year-olds to be trafficked and sexually abused by men coming from all over the world. We knew we needed to do more.

One day our phone rang, and it was a young girl trapped in a brothel calling for us to help. So we gave the information to this other organization, but we had to wait three days for them to get into position to do a raid. But it was tipped off and none of the girls were rescued. And now they were moved to a new brothel and we didn't know where they were or how to get them out.

We would never let this happen again. So we partnered with the government and started

our own SWAT team. Everything turned around. Instead of raids being tipped off, there was hardly ever a raid that wasn't successful. And now that girl that made the phone call, she is not only rescued, she's not only healed but today she is a social worker of our SWAT team. And when a rescue happens, the first person those girls see is her. She's also testified against a brothel owner. All the girls were rescued, the brothel was shut down, and no girls were being hurt there again.

So much incredible work has been done through the power of Christ but there is still so much more to do. There are girls trapped in brothels. We know where they are, and we know how to get them out, but we can't do it alone. We need your help. Together we can defeat the greatest evil of our lifetime.

**End of video**

**In the studio:**

**SHEILA:** Absolutely! The greatest evil of our lifetime. Can you imagine a grown man asking what's the youngest girl you have? It is chilling to me because it is so clearly the work of the enemy.

I was reading this morning in Psalm ten, and verses 17 and 18 say this: Lord, you know the hopes of the helpless. Surely you will hear their cries and comfort them. You will bring justice to the orphans and the oppressed, so mere people can no longer terrify them.

See, the thing is, that young girl who made that call and then thought it made no difference at all, God heard that cry. And now she is one of the ones that's part of the answer. The fact that she is the first face that rescued girls see, it's so God. God is such a redeemer that he would take someone who was steeped in that life, rescue her, restore her and now she is boots on the ground on the front line, going in there and telling other girls, "Listen, I've been where you are, and I live a different life now. I want to tell you about the God who changed everything."

This is our last week of Rescue Life. But we have some wonderful friends of the ministry who have put up a matching gift of \$320,000. And normally, the process of reaching, rescuing and restoring a girl is about \$128 to put one girl into some part of that process. So now if you're able to do that instead of rescuing one girl you will rescue two girls. If that is too much for you, \$64 will be matched by our friends and you will be part of rescuing one girl. I mean what can you do for \$64 that will make such an eternal difference in the world?

Some of you might have a business and God's blessed you and you're thinking, I want to do more. If you were able to do \$1280 that will be matched. Do you know that that literally would rescue 20 girls and bring them into freedom? And it is not just that we rescue them and let them go. No! We're committed to them. We're committed to their process of healing and learning a new skill.

So please! Please would you help us? This is, as I say, is our last week. Would you call that number on your screen? Will you give whatever you have? Just give the best gift possible. Decide to skip eating out one night. Who needs any more food? But think of the difference that would make in the life of a child who is crying out. So please, will you join me? Go to your phone, call that number and give the very best gift you can.

**Begin video clip:**

**Announcer:** Human trafficking is one of the world's darkest sources of criminal activity and money. As a result, children and young people are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators into a never-ending nightmare.

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at the risk of being trafficked, rescue those already enslaved and restore young lives giving them a future. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift now your gift of \$128 to help reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be

matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift today, we'll send you *Natural Remedies*. This beautifully illustrated and essential book explores ancient nutrition and the health benefits found in God's creation. A valuable reference with biblical insight to help you live your best life.

With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the *Jesus My Refuge* journal and pen set filled with scriptures reminding you of God's covering in times of need. You'll also be reminded to pray for those seeking refuge from the horrors of human trafficking.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280, which will now help rescue 20 children! And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant."

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

**End of video**

**On the mission field:**

**SHEILA:** Vulnerable little children need three things. They need to be reached. We need to continue going into the villages, going into the places where children are vulnerable and warning them, educating them. They need rescued. We have talked with some of the most amazing SWAT teams, are going in and rescuing these little girls and seeing traffickers go to prison.

But then the most beautiful part of this is this restore--reach, rescue, restore. We have seen where these girls are taken, and they're loved.

Is our work here over? Absolutely not. I think it's never been more urgent, but we need you to continue this work. God is moving in the darkness and saving lives one life at a

time.

**End of video**

**In the studio:**

**SHEILA:** Thank you so much. If our lines of busy, please keep calling. This really matters. For any gift at all, we're going to send you this book, *Natural Remedies: Ancient nutrition*. It's a fascinating book that God has already placed things that we need in nature to bring us good health and healing. And if you're able to give \$128, which will now rescue two girls, you get this beautiful *Jesus, My Refuge* journal and a pen. And also, appropriately enough, it has a little light on it. Probably blinding you now. Let's cast a little light into the darkness. Let's be the ones to determine, not on our watch! Let's determine it in Jesus' name that we're going to reach out, we're going to rescue and see girls restored because God loves them.

Thanks for being with us. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'll see you next time.