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Week 18: Spring Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Spring Mission Feeding Special

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me. We want to take today to show you something that is very close to our hearts. Not just Sheila and mine and my parents but everyone here at the ministry because for over three decades now we have been involved in what I view as being Christ to the world. So I hope you'll watch today and I hope you'll maybe say a little prayer because we want to invite you to be a part of something that is life-changing, it is life-saving.

SHEILA: It is so interesting, Randy because I'll never forget the day that your dad called, and I had lunch with James and Betty. I was given this tremendous opportunity to become part of this ministry. I'll tell you why this was so huge to me. Ever since I was a little girl growing up in Scotland, after I gave my life to Jesus three things mattered to me, helping people find Jesus as their own Savior, studying and teaching the Word of God, and serving the poor. And suddenly there was this door thrown wide open to do all three things.

I cannot tell you the impact it's had on my life as a believer to be able to get on a plane and to land somewhere in Africa and see for myself what this ministry has been doing for over 30 years. This is an important program, Randy.

RANDY: It is. The interesting thing about the situation in Africa, if you've been following us you've seen this for decades, we're not going into the same areas over and over. We actually go in when there is an emergency need, when there is a crisis and we change the situation with your help. We change the whole dynamic. In fact, Sheila and I have both been to places where there was a need for food. And then we can go to a place where mission feeding is active and you can

see the difference. Just to give you an idea, in a place where there is food insecurity as they call it, or a crisis situation, starvation, malnutrition, the children are lethargic, they don't play. The people are focused on one thing, where does my next meal come from? Where is my only meal for the next three days coming from, oftentimes. Whereas in the places where mission feeding takes place you see the children going to school. You see them smiling. You see them laughing. You may even hear them singing. That is the sound of hope and a future.

But right now what we're facing in a few key parts of Africa is crisis. We're looking and it's kind of crazy because on one side you've got floods that are destroying crops; on the other side you've got drought. But whatever the case is, the bottom line is the same, we're facing a crisis situation of malnutrition and hunger. But it's a problem that we can do something about. Take a look at this and then we'll tell you how.

On the mission field:

Open Captions: Flooding. Drought. Starvation.

ISAK: Our teams all over the continent of Africa are testifying to us that they are seeing levels of food insecurity like we have never experienced. This has been driven by multiple aspects. In some areas like South Sudan it is flooding. Floods that have raged through there. The worst floods in recorded history!

In Angola in specific, we're seeing a situation of multi-year drought. A drought that has gone on for many years, crops that have failed. Some families have lost not just one crop but multiple crops. Now there's no food--nothing at all! They don't have the ability to be able to provide for their children at all.

The problem is we don't have sufficient resource to reach the villages that so desperately need mission feeding where those mothers are saying, "Please, you have to help us." Because they're not only crying out to God, they're crying out to us because they know that we'll respond. They

know, James, that you and Betty, and the friends of *LIFE*, when they ask you, you turn the world upside down and you do everything you can do to respond and to make it possible. And so that's why they're crying out to us.

And I'm crying out to you, James, please! We need you to reach out and ask the friends of *LIFE* to dig deep in their hearts and to give the very best gift that they can give because their gift is the difference between another mother mourning the death of her child.

End of video

In the studio:

SHEILA: It's a severe mercy to kneel beside some of these moms as they commit their little ones to the ground. The last time I was in Angola we were taken by some of our local partners and that's one of the things I want you to know that I love about James and Betty. They never rush in and say, "We're here to save the world." They look to see, who is God using in this area and how can we underwrite this work? And I get to meet these people.

But they took me to the area where those little graves were and none of us spoke a word. It was so sobering. But then suddenly we realized a truck was approaching and we all had to back off because it was some people from the local village with the latest little one that was to be buried, who died not of some disease that was not unstoppable, died from the most stoppable disease of all--malnutrition!

Drought goes on in Angola year after year. I've literally been with mothers as they try to dig through the dirt to try and find anything that could constitute one meal. One mom said to me, "Sometimes I wish there was a ladder up to heaven and I could just climb up tonight to be with my children. I've lost too much."

But here's the good news in all of this, we can stop this. Our people on the ground are waiting. We have committed here at *LIFE* to feed 350,000 children. And the need is desperate and the need is right now, Randy. Honestly, I think it is worse than it's ever been.

RANDY: Really, if you don't have any food, if your child is dying, it is worse than it's ever been. When we look at a continent like Africa and we see millions, I think it is in the hundreds of millions of children, you think, how do we even approach this? Our goal right now is 350,000 children to feed this year. Frankly, I'd like to blow right past that and keep going.

How do you do that? Well, the answer is simple. You do it one at a time. We literally are in place to do it one at a time. And then you dip another bowl and you hand it to another child. And you dip another bowl and you hand it to another child. We can actually address this situation in a very real and tangible and effective way. It just requires your help. How do you do it? Well, the same way we do it--one at a time. You reach out your hand to us, we're reaching out to you right now. We partner together and we put a bowl in the hands of a hungry child.

It really comes down to that simplicity. And just to give you an idea, when we look at our budget overall for reaching the 350,000 children that we want to reach this year, it breaks down to putting that bowl of food in their hands. Three children for three whole months can be supported by a simple gift of \$30. You start to do the math and you go, how does that work?

Well, it works from decades of doing it, from partnering with other people, from having systems in place, from learning frankly from our mistakes and improving upon them. We've got this to a point of efficiency where your \$30, \$50, \$100 gift right now will feed those three, five or ten children for three entire months. A gift of \$1,000 will feed 100! But that's one at a time.

Sheila, I know you've sat there with these children and with their mothers and it's not the sheer numbers that really rocked your soul, it's that impact on that one.

SHEILA: Yeah, it's personal. It's deeply personal. I know that if we could take your hand and you came with us, you would change their world. For these mothers, so many of them I've seen on their knees asking God, please, send help. That's where it hits my heart. It's one mother with her child. There is something about watching a mother struggling to provide for her children that just breaks my heart. Would you watch this?

On the mission field:

ANNOUNCER: These mothers are working hard. Struggling each day. They try to grow food for their families with little success. Not from lack of work. Not because they don't love their children. But because they just don't have adequate resources.

Ongoing drought in Angola and record-breaking floods in South Sudan have made it almost impossible to grow the food their families need. In South Sudan, mothers are forced to rely on feeding their children leaves from trees. Angolan mothers will forage for pods from the baobab trees. At best, the children can relieve their aching stomachs when they eat from the pods. But they receive little or no nutritional value.

Unfortunately, as hard as these mothers struggle to keep their children alive, a small grave is where the story ends too many times.

SHEILA: In January, this mother had to attend a third funeral for her children. I asked her, "On any given day, what is your number one concern?" And it is one thing: Getting food for these children. That's all she thinks about--every single day morning, noon, and night. All she thinks about is where can I get something to feed these children today? And she said many times she has to put these two to bed hungry and she tries to encourage them. You know what she says to them? "Who knows what tomorrow will bring?" She is trying to keep hope alive.

Mission feeding saves lives! We've done it before, but the need has never been greater. We need your help today. We need your help now.

End of video**In the studio:**

SHEILA: Pauline, I remember her so well. Beautiful mother. She could have been my sister. We're just the same, mothers all they want is to be able to provide. Can you imagine that from the minute you wake up in the morning, if you slept at all, until the minute you lay your head

down on some rough pillow at night, the only thing you're thinking about is where can I get something to give my children?

And these pods, they might fill a little bit of the little ones' tummies but there is no nutritional food there. But what we can do is the food that we provide through mission feeding is nutritious food that is specially made for those children in that part of the world to give them what they need.

I've watched too, some of these mothers when their child does get so sick that they think I don't think they're going to make it another couple of days. I've seen them have to walk or get on a bicycle with a sick child and go as far as they can to try and find the nearest malnutrition clinic, to see if they would have some food. But then something disastrous has happened and that's why this program is so important to us.

In just recent months, 16--16 of our malnutrition clinics have been destroyed by flood. So now you have that mom that gets up in the morning and thinks, today I'm going to have to find a malnutrition clinic. And takes her sick child all day and she gets there and it's gone!

What happens to your hope then when the place that you think this is the place of hope is gone? And that's why, Randy, at this time in particular, we're not just committed to feeding those 350,000 children, but we're asking to give an additional gift because we want to rebuild those 16 clinics.

RANDY: Absolutely! And Sheila, with the heartache and the pain, the stories of the tragedies, I couldn't do this if I didn't know that there is hope and that we have a solution, and that we have viewers who have partnered with us over the years who care enough to enable us to do something. It would be... I just couldn't do it, you know? But let me tell you the joy, the joy of knowing, you know what? I don't care what happened to that clinic, that medical clinic, we're going to rebuild. We're going to get another one out there. Many of these are mobile, especially in Southern Sudan where you can actually move them wherever the need goes because the populations are moving because of the situation there.

We're in a place where we can actually be a solution. We're in a place where we can actually save lives. We can restore hope. We can give them a future. We can enable them to not worry about where the next meal came from or how am I going to get my child to a clinic? We can fill that gap so that they can start thinking about things like okay, how can I become a farmer? Or a doctor? Or a minister? We give them a hope for a life.

When I say we, I mean you. We can't do this without you. So Sheila, I just pray that everyone that's seeing these pictures that are so hard to see, I get it, but they will just realize God's put us here to be the answer to that problem. He's given a solution to the hunger and the famine and the pain and the medical needs. And we're that solution. We can do it!

SHEILA: Absolutely. And for some of you, some of you have supported us so faithfully for so many years. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! But what we're asking you at this time is would you consider giving an additional gift? Those of you who can, perhaps God's really blessed your business to rebuild those 16 malnutrition clinics. The total I think is something like \$392,000 because we need to not just get the structure there, we need the medicines, we need the beds, we need a place for those mothers to sit with their little ones when they come. So please, would you consider giving an extra gift? And let's rebuild in Jesus' name.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Across the continent of Africa, children are suffering facing severe malnutrition and even death. With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us.

Call now with your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. Also, please consider an extra gift to help immediately rebuild malnutrition clinics destroyed by record flooding in South Sudan. The urgent need is \$392,000 above our normal feeding budget and is critical to help save the lives of those who are suffering

most.

With your gift of any amount we will send you "It is Well" Quiet Time Bundle featuring an instrumental music CD with 12 classic hymns and a 31-day prayer booklet to help renew your soul.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "No Greater Love" framed print. This portrait is a reminder of our Savior's love and the price that was paid for our salvation.

Finally with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant." Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of video

On the mission field:

Open Captions:

Malnutrition contributes to the death of over three million children under the age of five every year.

>> It is not a new problem. And it is easy to be overwhelmed by its size, so many statistics laid before us. Of course, they're important but as we look at numbers, we can sometimes lose sight of what's behind them. So what is behind these numbers, among those masses? Well, there is Martino, Branco, Vida, Idalena, Antonia, Rusadya, Victoria, Maria, Sabena, Anna Paula, Mateo, Jenerosa, Adriana, Dinanona, Nasa, Paula, Azikia, Gendenia, Fernanda, Esperanza, Alena, Myodi, Estari, Myosa, Cecilia, Tatinia, Roberto, Thomas, Immanuel, Jenny.

When it comes to numbers the most important of all may be one. Just start by helping one.

End of video

In the studio:

RANDY: Will you be that one that reaches out to save that one? I pray you will. I pray you'll go online, go to the phones, give the best gift you can. And just remember, \$30, \$50 or \$100 will feed three, five or ten children for three whole months! It's that simple. It's that effective. Many of you can feed hundreds of children. I pray you will.

And right now we are going to rebuild those malnutrition clinics that have been destroyed. They're not going to stay that way. With your help, with the grace of God we're going to go back into these areas where children are in really critical shape and we are going to rebuild. Sheila, I really believe that 2021 can be the year that we do this.

SHEILA: Wouldn't that be amazing? Our son was home recently from grad school for a week, so I did a little experiment. I said, "Okay, the three of us are going to go out for lunch and we're going to take \$30 and see what we can get." And honestly, it was gone. It was just gone. I actually had to add a couple dollars to it to include a tip--gone in one hour.

Do you know that same \$30 would feed three children not for one lunch, that \$30 would feed three children for three whole months! Can you imagine that? Can you imagine the hope that that brings to a mother's heart?

These women who are faithfully serving their children, loving their children, pouring their lives out for their children, praying for their children and you and I have this amazing privilege of being the answer to their prayers. Think about how we just spend money and we don't even sometimes pay much attention. When you start to pay attention, you realize you know what? For the next three months I'm not going to have a manicure, I'll do it myself. And you put that money, you suddenly realize you can impact the lives of three children for three months with \$30, five children for three months with \$50, and with \$100 then you can feed ten children for three whole months!

You see the thing is we can all do this. It is no accident that Randy and I and you are on the earth at this time. The crisis is unprecedented. Unprecedented drought in the south. Unprecedented

flooding in the north. But we are the answer to their prayers. So please help us. If you're able to give an additional gift, because we're not walking away from our commitment to feed those 350,000 children, we will not stop that, but we need those of you who can, to say okay, I'm going to give an additional gift. Because we're going to make sure that when those mothers make it to that malnutrition clinic with a very desperately ill child it's there, it's waiting for them, it's ready, the medications are there and we can tend to those extreme cases of malnutrition. I believe 2021 can be an amazing year, Randy.

RANDY: Yeah, and you've said a couple of times, "Be an answer to their prayers." My dad likes to say, "If you want your prayers answered just be that answer to someone else's prayer." When we look at a situation like this it's really easy to go, if God really was a good God, if he loved people, why are there hungry people? Why wouldn't he help them? That's what we're here to do. You're the answer to that prayer. You're the answer to the problem.

It's very simple. Go online, go to the phones, give the best gift you can. Go above and beyond. Let's put those malnutrition clinics back in place, as Sheila said. Be an answer to a prayer today. Do it now.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Across the continent of Africa, children are suffering facing severe malnutrition and even death. With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us.

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End of video

On the mission field:

ISAK: We've experienced the worst flooding in recorded history in South Sudan in this past year. It's destroyed many homes. It's destroyed many livelihoods, displacing close to a million people that have been displaced for a long period of time now. The impact of that flooding has meant that we lost 16 malnutrition clinics! Unless we rebuild them, the more than 10,000 children whose lives are being saved each and every month as a result of the mission feeding intervention through those clinics have nowhere to go.

In Angola we've had multiple years of drought. Not just one year! Not just one season lost! But multiple years to the point where now families in many of the villages, many of the areas where we're working are testifying that they literally have lost everything. They have had no crop whatsoever. They have no food to feed their children. It's why we have to reach them right where they are in their villages before these children get to the point where it's too late.

We can reach these families but we cannot do it without you. We need you to open your hearts today. I need you to give the gift of life. I need you to give the gift of food because mission feeding will save their lives. But mission feeding won't happen without you. So I'm asking you today please, dial that number on your screen or get online. You give however you choose to

give but I ask you today, please! Give the gift of life. Give the gift of food and give it today before it's too late.

End of video

In the studio:

RANDY: I pray you will do your best. Sheila, there is so much joy in knowing that we are having an impact.

SHEILA: I know. And honestly, I just want you to know for me, I cannot wait till I'm actually able to go back there and hug those moms and those little ones and tell them that we didn't forget about them. Because every time we leave we promise them we will go home and we will tell your stories. And our people are on the ground right now and they are waiting for us.

So please, if you haven't called up until now, if you've just been watching, please go online, please give the very best gift you can and together we will see the world changed by the love of Jesus.