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Week 41: Rescue Life

James and Betty Robison

Sheila Walsh

JAMES: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm telling you, this is life today. You're not only watching and hearing about life today, the real life that Christ offers -- abundant life. Not necessarily abundance in life, but abundant life, regardless of all that's around you. And we happen to have our favorite people today; the people watching are our favorite people because you are amazing. You move mountains. You never fail to notice the unnoticed and the least of these. And you don't just notice them; you're basically good Samaritans. You don't just pass by, change channels, do something else. And then we have also, Sheila Walsh, would you say she's --

BETTY: One of our other favorite people!

JAMES: On the planet, she is! And actually, before she became *LIFE Outreach*'s host and all the things she does to magnify the Lord. Well, Sheila is a great singer, communicator, speaker, but she's also, in my opinion, and many people's opinion, a great writer, a great author. Here's a book. Let me just read the title, *Holding on When You Want to Let Go*; "Clinging to hope when life is falling apart, and there seems to be no hope."

Sheila, I wish the audience was filling the studio. But literally, we have chosen to distance, to be certain that we in no way ever adversely affect you. But Sheila, I just believe that people would be cheering as I know they do all over the world. We're so glad to have you.

SHEILA: Honestly, my husband Barry and I were talking this morning about what a gift it has been at this stage in our life to be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with you and Betty. These are exciting days! They're dark days, and they're exciting days.

JAMES: If the enemy is going to be more successful in doing the damage, the dissension, division, and destruction that he's guilty of, the father of lies and the murderer, then how about the Father's family make an imprint on the Father's planet, the Father's garden that we've been left here as overseers. All right! Let's talk about this book.

BETTY: I love the title.

JAMES: Yes. It is absolutely beautiful!

BETTY: That describes all of us. We've been there. We go there at different times.

SHEILA: It's so interesting because I actually started to write a different book, and about two chapters in, I felt the Lord say, "No, this is not for this time. Put that aside."

I was like, what do you want me to do, Lord?

He said, "I want you to bring a tidal wave of hope to this nation and those around the world and to God's people."

Because it is so tempting to look at what's going on and feel despair and think we're never going to make it through this. But then I've redefined redemption because so often, when we think about redemption, we think it's all about us. It's about us being redeemed.

But I was reading Tozer, this book where he said, "Redemption says that it's a redeeming of your mind; where you place God where he always belongs, on the throne. It places us where we are, in the dirt. And the purpose of redemption is he reaches from the throne, and he picks us up, and he raises us up."

That's why I want there to be, literally, a tidal wave of hope, not a little splash, not a little rainstorm, a tidal wave of the hope of Jesus Christ.

JAMES: Well, he is the blessed hope. I want you to go into detail. I've got some of the chapter titles that I think you're obviously interested in, or they wouldn't be in here. "When You Feel Alone." Do you know that one of the things that our staff in the prayer center tell us? The number one prayer request normally has to do with health, for either family, friend, neighbor, or personal health. But if there is a close second that doesn't really pop out, many people call; they're lonely. We've had people who will call and say, "I'm calling again today because I knew you'd talk to me. I knew you'd care. I knew you'd pray with me."

So loneliness is a big factor. Deal with that for a little bit.

SHEILA: Honestly, that's why I wrote this book because when COVID hit, and everything changed, I found myself beginning to spiral again. I'd been diagnosed with severe clinical depression years ago, but I was on a pretty even plain doing well. But as the weeks turned into months, I found myself really spiraling and feeling tempted to let go.

JAMES: Was this during those times when you really even couldn't go out and speak?

SHEILA: All my events were canceled. And I found myself asking the Holy Spirit, how do I live in these days? I knew how to live the way it was; I don't know how to live in these days. And he began to speak to me about the hope that we have. And one of the things I began to do was going outside every single morning. We live in a three-story townhome. I'd go out in the middle on the balcony, and I would read the Psalms out loud. Because I found that Athanasius wrote, one of the early church fathers, "Most of scripture speaks to us, the Psalms speak for us." That was so powerful to me because I read three Psalms out loud every day. I'm sure our neighbors are blessed. The dog usually barks.

But it is so good for our ears to hear what our eyes are reading.

BETTY: I love to do that! Read the scriptures out loud. First of all, it just really grabs my heart and speaks to me, and encourages me, and lifts me up. You find yourself going into praise to God.

SHEILA: And there is a difference between believing the Word of God and receiving the Word of God. Because honestly, I did it this morning. This morning I got up, and I'd had a long weekend; I was tired. I'm in the kitchen, and I'm thinking, Lord, I feel heavy. And so what I do now is I raise my arms, and I'm like, I'm here, Father. It reminded me of Christian when he was a little boy and traveled with us with Women of Faith. I remember one night we were going through Chicago airport, and he's marching on with his little Thomas the Tank Engine backpack. And he got tired, and suddenly, he stopped, and he just did this. [Lifts arms] And he didn't have to say a word because I heard him, "Mom, I'm tired."

I do that every day now. I'll stand before the Father, and I'll go, "Father, I'm tired." And I feel held by the God of miracles.

JAMES: One of the things I've been saying to God, and I feel like I'm in the closest relationship I've ever had with the Father. I feel like I get in his lap every day, and I lean up against him. Now I literally go every day; I want to know what's on your heart. I want to know what's on your heart. And he leaps towards that desire to know and to have a positive effect in the area of his concerns. I mean, there is just something about someone really caring what's going on. What's on your heart? Go ahead, Sheila. Jump in another chapter, would you?

SHEILA: Here's one of the verses that I, it's like we have the Word of God, and we think, oh, this is great! That's so great! But we need to have the Word of God in us, like Psalm 46, verse one. This is what I read this morning. God is our refuge; it's where we hide and our strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. It doesn't get any better

than that. So when I feel overwhelmed, and I don't know where to hide, God, Father, you're my refuge, you're my strength, and you're always ready to help in times of trouble. I'm just thinking of our viewers right now; you can't pay your bills, you're worried about your children, you don't know what's going to happen in your marriage, your finances are all wacky. God is always ready to help. And it's like we have the greatest resource on the planet, but so often, we don't receive what the Father has already given to us.

So when I found myself spiraling like that, it was like I found myself reminding God of his promises every single day. And I still do it! Every single day I'll cry out, and I'll say, Father, you told me this, and you told me that. So I hold onto that. Because I'm thinking a lot of our viewers probably right now feel like they're on a ledge, and they could slip at any minute. I used to before I had the two dogs I have now, and I know I can bring a dog story up, the biggest dog fan on the planet over here.

But I used to have a little Westie, and one day I was out taking him for a walk, and he slid down a storm drain. I was totally panicked. I could see he was on a ledge. One of my neighbors came out and said, "My son and I will help."

And they managed to get the metal plate off, and we could see this darling little dog shivering. I knew if he slipped off the ledge, we'd lose him.

So the neighbor said, "Listen, I'm going to hold my son's ankles and lower him down."

So I said to him, "Listen, grab hold of him. I don't care if he bites you. I don't care what he does, just don't let go."

I feel like there are a lot of people right now who feel they are on a ledge. And I want you to know God is the rescuer, and he will grab hold of you, and he will not let go. God's word is full of rescue stories. Look at Adam and Eve! Look at Noah! Look at David! Look at Moses! Look at the children of Israel! God is the rescuer, and for those who feel like they're just on a ledge, don't give up hope. Hold on. God is not finished writing your

story.

JAMES: He will get us out of any pit regardless of how we got there if we were thrown in like Joseph was by his own brothers. If we, by circumstance, just fall in. Or if we dig the pit we find ourselves in, he is inclining his ear. He is anxious to lift us up out of the pit, the despair, and defeat and put our feet back on solid ground.

Now you're talking about *Holding on When You Want to Let Go*—clinging to hope when your life is falling apart. Here's what I know about the way you write: it's a lot like this. It is a conversation. It communicates, but it communicates far more than Sheila's opinion or her ideas. It actually communicates the mind and the heart and the will of God, and the love of God because that's what had literally overtaken her and taken control of her life when she many times didn't even feel like holding on. When she was full of despair and depression, God walked her through it. So what she's put here will help you get out of whatever pit you're in, however, you got there and literally found out that he's holding on. He wants to hold you and pull you close. And this is going to inspire you.

Sheila, just carry us a little more in the things that you know as people read because you can cover a few of the bases that God put on your heart while we're talking. But when they get alone, it's just like they'll have their Bible there as they read. They'll be directed to the Bible. They'll be directed to the Father. So touch some more of these points that are meaningful.

SHEILA: One of the things that were huge for me was silencing the lies that we have in our head. I remember when I was 16 years old, and I had the lead part of Maria in West Side Story in our high school musical. One of the songs is, where she sings, "I Feel Pretty." For the dress rehearsal, the whole high school came to the dress rehearsal, and I'm halfway through singing "I Feel Pretty" when a senior boy yells out really loud enough for everyone to hear, "Well, you don't look it!" And there was, the whole auditorium burst out laughing, and I was literally frozen to the spot. I couldn't move.

And what that spoke to was the foundation stone in my life. We all have these foundation stones built when we were little. And what I discovered was mine was you're not good enough. There is something wrong with you. And I think when we begin to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal, what are the foundation stones that I have believed? And then, we begin to replace them with the truth of the Word of God.

The other night, Barry and Christian and I, our son, were having a conversation, and Christian was talking about doing a zoom call, and he had a baseball cap on. And Barry said, "You should take your baseball cap off when you do that. That's not very professional."

Christian is like, "Dad, it is just some friends."

And he's like, "Yep, but you're training to be a clinical psychologist. You need to be professional."

Christian was like, "Dad, they don't really do it like that anymore. You get to just be yourself."

Well, I totally overreacted. And I said to Barry, "How can you do that?" I mean, my response was ridiculous. And it shut the conversation down.

Christian went to his room, and Barry said, "Can I help you at all?"

I'm like, "No!" And he went upstairs. And I sat there, and I was reduced to being that five-year-old girl who thinks there's something wrong with her. And I interpreted everything that was going on between them as something that was wrong with me.

But do you know what I've discovered? I'm discovering, and this is ridiculous at this stage and age, the joy of repentance. What repentance actually means. Repentance is not an emotion. It is an action. If I wait until I feel like repenting, it will be a long wait. And

you can say you're sorry until you are blue in the face, but if you don't change your actions. And I never feel more whole than when I ask for forgiveness.

I literally dropped to my knees in our den, and I was like, "Father, what is wrong with me?" When our reaction is stronger than the situation, there is history attached, and that's what I'm learning. It was feeding into all my old lies of you're not good enough, you'll never be loved, you're not pretty enough, you're not thin enough, you're just not enough. And when we bring all lies into the presence of the Lord, we allow him to shine his light into the darkest corners of our hearts.

I mean, you had that, James. You had so many issues like that when you were just a little boy, and you didn't have a father saying, "Son, I'm proud of you. You're the best that ever could be." We all, when we can discover those lies that the enemy loves to use, and replace them with the glorious truth of, "You're my son. I'm so proud of you." It changes everything.

BETTY: Well, and today, with everything that is going on, this cancel culture, there is a lot of condemnation. And we need to feel that redemption from the Lord and know that he created us; we are special. And we're not -- none of us are qualified.

SHEILA: Of course not!

BETTY: Except by God's grace and his forgiveness and his love. And so if we could just get past that because everybody, the highlight of the news today is condemnation because people are just being put down. You can't say this. You can't say that. You're not much of a person anymore.

SHEILA: Cancel culture is straight from the pit of hell. Cancel culture has nothing to do with the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God begins with the understanding we're all flawed, we're all broken, but we have a redeemer, we have a rescuer. God always has a rescue plan. Our culture wants to say, "No, you're done. You're over." And when cancel

culture says you're over, God says, "No, you're mine."

JAMES: The father of lies and the divider, the murderer, is also the accuser of the brethren, and his greatest accusations come against the brethren, the family of God. Here's the thing, when he accuses us, the sad thing is, the sad fact is, we begin to agree with him. He accuses us of a place where we know we failed. We absolutely know. So we find ourselves getting in agreement with the enemy rather than in agreement with God, who said, "I gave my son to cover that. I never see it. It's gone as far as the east is from the west when you just receive that wonderful redemptive love, that unconditional love that I'll pour out on the prodigal, not only when you were at home or when you came home but while you were in the pigpen. I still love you. I still want to redeem you. I want to cover you; I don't want to shame you."

The enemy is accusing. The sad thing is we get in agreement with the enemy. We accept his accusation, and then we begin to accuse others of the brethren because he tells us something about them. It may actually be wrong, but rather than having unconditional, redemptive love, we then become a divisive force ourselves. This is going to change the lives, I believe, of millions of people.

Father, I want to pray that because you've put something in Sheila that's far more than a gift or talent, you're in her in your fullness in glory, which she sees what she needs to acknowledge. Deal with this, Father, knowing that you will deal with it appropriately, perfectly. And we're not going to allow the accuser to put us down, stomp us down, overwhelm us, and overcome us. We're going to walk over the enemy. So God, please, raise up millions of people that will find the hope that Sheila is talking about, in Jesus' name.

You know there is a phone number there if you need somebody to pray with you any time. If you're lonely, many times, people call and say, "I just need to talk to somebody that will love me." All right, do it. Feel free to call.

And if you would like to have this book, you can get it online or in the bookstores. It's there. Let me tell you something. Sheila, we're going to go in just a moment to one of the most heartbreaking sites on the planet. We're going to see precious little children -- by the way, this is happening all over America. It's happening all over the world -- trafficking these children! They're being brought over to be sold. Listen to me! God Almighty put in the hearts of people like you, and you're going to listen to Sheila right there with these beautiful children that are being trafficked. Not maybe -- are! And the freedom for them is perfect, and it is in your hands. And it always does work when that love gets in the situation. And you're going to see it, and you're a part of it because you make it happen.

I want you to watch closely. Let me just say this to you. You help us bless some of these who have been held captive, and you just ask, along with other gifts we have, you just say, "Will you please send me Sheila's book?" You better believe it. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

SHEILA: How do you hold on when you want to let go? When you're at your darkest point? What keeps you moving to the light? I've met some young girls that are living in the dark. They're surrounded by evil, and the light must seem so dim to them.

You see, these girls are victims of human trafficking. Their lives have been turned upside down by cruel, ruthless, money-hungry individuals who see these girls and boys as nothing but a commodity to be traded and sold.

Most of these victims were tricked, lied to, or even kidnapped into brothels around the world, and now they're being held captive by chains, violent threats, and emotional abuse. So what keeps these girls and boys holding on? What is the dim light in their darkness? It's hope. A hope that this torment will end someday. A hope that they can return to their families. A hope that they can get a safe, productive job to support themselves. A hope that God has a plan for their life.

I can't imagine having to hold on to such a dim possibility of hope, but we can help provide a bright hope that will light up their darkness. We can help save these girls and boys. We can rescue them out of their darkness and start the healing process so that they can see God's bright plan for their lives.

But we have to do it now. They're waiting. Don't let their hope die.

End of video

In the studio:

JAMES: Sheila, it is unbelievable what's happening to children, but there is an answer. That answer is the love of God. I'm telling you, God put on the hearts of the mission workers who planted their lives in the middle of that darkness and that pain. Some of them went having watched *LIFE Today* that you make possible, and they were sent to the mission field. And they spend their entire life there now. But we have to support them in order for them to reach those that are being trapped or being led into that horrible trafficking, that bondage, that indescribable slavery. We can head them off. We can reach them, we can rescue them, and then we can restore them and even teach them a craft. Give them a life. That's what God does. And it does work.

Betty, we have seen the need all over the world, but we've also seen the effect of love. We can no longer tell you all the exact places these are because oftentimes, those in corruption find out, and they attack. It's one of the most dangerous things a person can be involved in. But it works.

Sheila, you graphically portrayed what's happening. We could see it there in the images. But what God does through those people who planted their lives there, full of the love of God, because of the viewers of *LIFE Today* all the over the world, who say, "I'm going to reach and rescue." And do you know \$128 is the average for reaching one and being able to rescue them and begin the restoration process? Some viewers like you have given us a \$320,000 challenge. They've been doing this now for years because they say, "We so

believe in the importance of this."

Sheila, I think our viewers need to know we've been there. You've been there. Love doesn't fail. It works, doesn't it?

SHEILA: It's like we have this covert army of love and hope that just goes marching in and reaches into that pit and brings these girls out and says, you are not a number to God, you are a name. You have a hope, and you have a future. I've seen it with my own eyes! It's amazing!

JAMES: And it happens because of the people right now. You say we're behind the scenes. But you see, you notice the unnoticed. You notice the least of these. You notice those in prison, in bondage, held captive by the deceiver, the destroyer, and you set them free. Imagine people saying we'll match \$320,000. \$128 is the average to save a life and to begin the process. A \$64 gift right now will be doubled to \$128. You give \$128, and it won't just rescue one but two. And we always ask, and always will because I believe you're able to do it, \$1280 rescues ten, now it's 20 -- it doubles.

We have some beautiful gifts to send you. You're going to really like it. You will, and children will. And so please, get your bank card, write a check, and make it to *LIFE*. Call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. Once you mail it, please tell us. We need to know. You can go online, take that bank card and use it or use that card and make a phone call. You're going to set somebody free, and you're going to give joy to missionaries that love these precious ones and want to see them set free. You are miracle workers. Please make that call, make that gift.

Begin video clip:

ANNOUNCER: Innocent children and young people, longing to be loved and cared for, are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry

of human trafficking.

Through Mission: Rescue *LIFE*, you can reach out to educate children at 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 Sheila Walsh's brand-new book, *Holding on When You Want to Let Go*; "A lifeline of hope for those who feel their life is falling apart."

With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the *Beauty Out of Ashes* puzzle set featuring an image taken by our team while on a trip to the mission field. This 500-piece puzzle forms a beautiful portrait of hope in the midst of despair. Included is a 24-piece puzzle for your children and grandchildren.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280, which will now help rescue 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant." Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio:

JAMES: Well, I just believe with all my heart. By the way, if you ever try to call and don't get through, remember there could be hundreds of people who are calling. Many times we will pray with over 2,000 people, many of them coming to Christ, but many of them want to be set free.

If you didn't get through, keep calling until you get through. And make the gift God put

on your heart. If you'd like to have Sheila's book, just ask for it, because along with the beautiful puzzles, I mean this is a picture that Janice Meyer took, literally traveling on the mission field and walking through a community where there was some beauty from ashes. And then there is the little puzzle for children with the great big pieces. This is so cool!

If you want Sheila's book, ask for it. Sheila, will you share again in the next program with us?

SHEILA: I would love to. There is so much hope!

JAMES: Yes, there is. Thank you for watching. Thank you for sharing hope. You are truly miracle workers. We love you. Thank you for helping us share God's love.