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Week 48: Fall Mission Feeding #2

Sheila Walsh

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I cannot tell you how grateful I am that you have tuned in for today's program. This is a really important program for me. As we go on, I'll share the significance of this and how this journey that I went on and continue on has been life-changing.

For all of my life, I've been aware of the fact that there are children in different parts of the world who are malnourished, who are desperately sick, who are starving. It is one thing to know about it in your head; it is quite another for your feet to land in Southern Africa and for you to meet some of these children and these mothers face-to-face.

Because the reality is that in so much of Southern Africa, there is desperate poverty. We either have extreme climate conditions, where the crops simply don't grow. The mothers are literally digging in the dirt to find anything to give their children to eat, or we have disastrous flooding like in South Sudan, and the crops are ruined. So it is this great irony of, to the north, there is too much water, and further south, there is not enough.

Well, I want to introduce you to some of the people I had the privilege of meeting on this particular program. I know sometimes it can be hard to watch specials on issues like this, but I'm asking you if you would stay with me on this journey.

Yesterday, I had a hard day. We all have them. I was incredibly busy. I came home. I had 60 emails that said they all needed responses by that evening. I had something I was supposed to write, and it needed to be done by the following morning. And I kind of fell into that little bit of saying, Lord, this is too much. This is ridiculous!

And then Jeremy, our senior producer here at *LIFE Outreach*, sent me one of the pieces for today's program, and I hit play. I sat at my desk, and everything changed. I suddenly realized that the things that you and I struggle with on a daily basis, yes, they can be hard, they can be frustrating, but when I suddenly remembered these mothers that I have sat with, that I have tried to dig stuff out of the dirt with, whose children I've embraced, whose children I've prayed for, what a perspective shift for me. Perhaps it will be for you too. Please 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: How does a mother like that even find the courage to say to her two remaining children, "Who knows what tomorrow might bring?" Because she knows what tomorrows have brought in the past. I can't imagine the pain of burying three children.

You know, someone said to me once when they saw a piece like that, "She doesn't look very moved. She looks almost quite stoic as she relates." She is numb. Pain can numb you. Because the thing is, she still has two children who desperately need her.

I've watched these women work because this isn't something that happened five years ago; this is today. Like, I don't know if you're watching this, and you've just finished your breakfast, or you're getting ready for dinner, but this is what's going on there right at this very minute. These mothers are trying to find anything they can give their children to eat.

Southern Africa's death rate amongst children under five is astronomical, and one of the main reasons is malnutrition. When a child gets sick, something even as simple as a cold, they have no resistance to fight that. And so often, with something that would be incredibly curable and treatable here, these little ones succumb -- and one more grave.

I've walked with one of these mothers to a place where she had buried two of her children, and it just broke my heart. We wept together. She could have been you, and she could have been me -- she was just a mother who cared. They work so hard. They get up first thing in the morning to try to find anything. I tasted some of that stuff from the baobab tree, and there is nothing to it. It was like eating Styrofoam. No nutrition, no protein -- nothing that would build up a child's immunity.

That's why at Mission Feeding, we have our own factories on the ground. So we have people

waiting right now ready to produce more of this food. And we give it to them in this, this simple orange bowl. And the food that's prepared for these children has all the nutritional needs that children in that part of the world need to go from literally dying to turning toward life.

So let me explain how we can make a miracle in a bowl happen. We've made a commitment to feed 350,000 children. This is how it breaks down, \$30 will feed three children for three months. I mean, that's amazing! \$50 will feed five children for three months. \$100 will feed ten children for three months. And if you're able to give \$1,000, that will feed like an entire village -- 100 children for three months. Because some of these children, the ones who are waiting right now, it is as if they are on a knife's edge, and simply one day of there being no more food puts that very child's life in danger that there might not be another morning. Watch this.

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: That little one is literally struggling for every breath. I've been in that malnutrition clinic where Isak is and watched these desperate mothers who love their children every bit as much as you love your children. And yet, they have nothing. They have absolutely nothing! But this one orange bowl of food can change everything. I've gone from the devastation of the malnutrition clinics to a village where we've already established Mission Feeding, and it is literally like going from darkness into light.

We can do this! As the body of Christ on the earth at this point, it is our privilege to change the world in Jesus' name. Think about the ridiculous things we argue about and how polarized everyone is on social media and even in the church. This is one thing that should unite us; that we get to be the hands and the feet of Jesus Christ to these poor innocent children who are struggling to breathe.

I read a scripture today. It is in the book of James, who was Christ's little brother. This is James chapter one, verse 27: *Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.*

I looked up the meaning of pure in the "pure and genuine religion." In Greek, it means catharsis. So it is where we get our word cathartic from. It means one of the most cleansing things that you and I can do for our souls as believers in Christ is to care for widows and to care for their children.

So I'm asking you, in Jesus' name, will you help us? Betty Robison has said so often, "We pray that the line of children waiting for food will never be longer than the bowls that we have to

give." So here's how we're going to do it. We've made a commitment to our partners, who are on the ground right now waiting to feed 350,000 children this year. \$30 will feed three children for three months. \$50, five children for three months. \$100 will feed ten children for three months. And if God has blessed you in your business or some other way, \$1,000 will feed 100 children for three months!

What a privilege! What a joy! And if each one of us does something. I remember the first time that my son Christian saw these little bowls, and he said, "Mom, what are they for?" And I said, "Well, these are for children in Southern Africa who are starving. We've discovered that when we're giving them food, they have nothing to put the food in. So we made these bowls for them." Maybe, I don't know, five or six months later, he dragged this sack into the bedroom, and he said, "Mom, every single pocket money and every allowance you've given me, I've put it in this bag, and I want to take it to *LIFE*, and I want to buy these orange bowls for children."

We can all do something. As a family, don't you think it would be the most amazing thing this year to determine that rather than looking at what I need or what I can do for myself if we could have the eyes of Christ and see those who are starving and who are broken. And these mothers, the thing that blows me away, they still have faith. They still believe in God. Can you imagine lying on the straw mat with your children beside you starving, but your cry is going up to heaven? Father, please let somebody hear my prayer.

Well, I've been there, and I've heard face-to-face, and I'm bringing it to you, and I'm asking you, please help us do this. What a joy! When you and I are finished with this life, and we're home-free forever, what a joy it will be to see hundreds and hundreds of children there because not only did we feed their bodies, we told them about Jesus who sent us.

So please, call that number on your screen. Call right now. Give the very best gift you possibly can. Thank you.

Begin video clip:

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 lifesaving 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. This urgent need is \$392,000 above our normal feeding budget and is critical to help save the lives of those suffering most.

With your gift of any amount, we will send you *Christmas Grace*. This eye-opening, new 31-day devotional will give you a fresh perspective on the greatest gift ever given and the life-transforming hope found in Christ's birth.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "Love and Thanks" tumbler set with scriptures reminding us that "God's love never fails" and to always "Give thanks." These tumblers will keep drinks hot or cold wherever you go.

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**

ANNOUNCER: Even in the best of times the journey of life is rarely easy. This has been especially true for Paulina who as a mother of five children became a widow when her husband passed away. As a

single mother living in poverty she provided for her children the best she could. But sadly, it wasn't enough.

INTERPRETER: My child was coming home from school and she started feeling of some fever. Then the next morning my child died. The second one also came home from school with a fever. Then we went to the hospital. We were given two tablets but nothing helped. So we started digging roots and boiling them for him to drink. It did not do anything. At last he died. I lost another child the same way six months later.

SHEILA: We've sat with these little ones for quite some time today and they haven't moved. Even the food that she is able to provide, it's all starch, nothing that will help her children get strong which is why -- one of them, literally came home from school one day sick and by the next morning they were gone because these little ones have no reserves.

This little mother has told us that if there was a stairway right now that she could just walk up and go home to be with the Lord and take her little ones with her, she would go because she's already had three deposits in heaven.

If you've ever asked yourself, "Lord, I'd love to do something for you this year, what can I do?" Here's what we can do. We can take care of widows. We can take care of their children. Mission feeding is so important because what we provide is protein, it is vitamins, it is everything that these little ones need to give them some resistance. And then we can honor the fact that we don't love God only in what we say, we love God in what we do and how we obey his Word.

In the studio

SHEILA: One of the things I wanted to share with you that is really phenomenal is after I was there that particular year in Angola, we went back, we shared the need, and so many of you responded. And now, Paulina is a happier mother because her two darling little children get a meal every single day. But there are so many Paulinas left in Africa. So many who are praying

and hoping that somebody will care for them.

It takes such a little amount. So if you're just to do, like skipping something, let's skip a few lattes in the morning. Let's skip getting a manicure. Let's skip something and invest it into the lives of the children. Because the wonderful thing is not only do we go into those villages and set up feeding programs, the great thing is then children come to school to get a meal, and it breaks that devastating cycle of poverty that can go from generation to generation.

Until we bring in Mission Feeding, the children are too sick to walk to school; they're too weak. I was thinking even as I watched that last piece, if this happened in this country, if you heard of a child coming home from school one day saying he felt sick and he was dead the following day, and it happened to a second child, and a third, that would be on the evening news. The whole country would be watching, wanting to know what happened? What can we do to help? This is happening all over Southern Africa right now. The need has never been greater.

Isak has been sending us back reports of just how devastating the situation is and becoming increasingly worse. I stood by those little open graves, and I asked the gentleman who was digging, "Are these for specific children?" And he said, "No, these are for the ones that will come next week."

You and I can do something about that. Let's set up these feeding programs in every village where they need them. Let these graves be filled in and turned into flower gardens. Let make a difference in the world! And we can do it with your help. Think about the difference you and I can make for very little. It would be a wonderful thing to start your children early on contributing to something like this; to know that there's a lot of children in the world who are not hoping for a new iPhone for Christmas, they would just like to go to bed not hungry.

As you saw in one of our pieces, the flooding in South Sudan has been devastating. It's washed away so many of our malnutrition clinics. The thought that some of these mothers, in their devastation and desperation, walk for miles to come to a clinic and discover that it's no longer there. It's gone. So we have made a commitment to rebuild these clinics. For \$24,500, we can

build an entire clinic, staff it, medicines, everything that's needed. If God has blessed you in some way this year, would you consider rebuilding one of those clinics? And we've got lots of lovely gifts that we want to send to you. And I know you don't do it for that. But I'm looking forward to bringing you back stories like the one from Paulina where she once was in a desperate stage, and now her children are fed. Let's do that over and over and over again. And we will bring you the stories.

Do you know that just \$30 will feed three children for three months? \$30! \$50 will feed five children for three months. When you think about what we would spend \$30 on, \$50, it's gone like that. To be able to sustain three, five children for three months? There is so much that I want to share with you because there is hope on the horizon, and it starts -- it starts with you and me.

Begin video clip:

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End of video

On the mission field

ISAK: My heart is just broken, sitting here in this cemetery surrounded by graves that are each and every one of them, graves for children. Little lives that have been stolen by malnutrition; children who have starved to death because they didn't have enough food. Mothers whose hearts are broken, devastated at the loss of their child. It truly breaks my heart. But you know what breaks my heart even more is the fact that we could have avoided this, we could have changed this, we could have stopped these graves from being filled with these little lives. We could have saved these children if we had been able to act in time. If we'd just been able to get to their village, take Mission Feeding, and give them a bowl of food a day.

I need your help today. I need you to help me ensure that the next grave doesn't get filled with another child who died for no good reason. So please, give a gift of life today. Give the gift of Mission Feeding. If you can give \$30, \$50, or \$100, you can save three, five, or ten children. Ten children's lives that are relying on you. Ten mothers are saying, please, please give that gift today! Please give the gift of Mission Feeding.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: Don't you love that we get to do this? So often, things can be presented as "You need to do this!" I think this is a privilege that we get to do this. I love what it says in James, you're cleansing your soul as you stand in the presence of the Lord to reach out and care for others.

So if the lines have been busy, please keep calling. Let's determine that we're going to make a difference in Jesus' name, and see food, hope, health, and the gospel of Jesus Christ come to people who are in desperate, desperate need.

Remember, no matter how little you can give, \$30, can you imagine that for \$30, you could feed three little ones for three whole months? Can you imagine the prayers that you will be an answer to? That's a joy! We get to do this in Jesus' name.

Thank you for being with us. Remember, if you need us, we're always here; there's always a prayer line. So until next time, from James and Betty, from all of us here at *LIFE*, God bless you!