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Week 12: Rescue Life

Sheila Walsh

Mission special #1

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh, and I'm so glad that you have tuned in to this particular program. I really believe that there is a potential in the next few minutes that we spend together to make a significant impact against the evil that is going on in our world. I'm talking about human trafficking, which is the largest criminal activity, the fastest-growing in the world, in fact. I took some notes. Human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry. And then when you come down to sex trafficking, it's estimated 5 million victims.

Now, I know we can talk about different things and think, well, yeah, there's something wrong with that. That should be stopped; that shouldn't be allowed to happen. The thing I want to share with you today, I want to take you with me because I've seen with my own eyes the evil of what is going on out there, and the people who are behind the scenes, and the innocents pressured into living a life that no one, no woman, no man, no child would ever choose for themselves.

I'll never forget my first trip with Rescue LIFE to Southeast Asia. I remember the first day, seeing for the first time how young so many of these girls are. When you catch a glimpse behind the makeup and clothes they're made to wear, you see in their eyes a different story. It is a story of evil.

And the more I study God's word, and I think, what does the Lord want you and me to do for this particular evil? It's crystal clear. This is Psalm 82, verse four: Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people.

It doesn't get much clearer than that. So what I'd like to do is paint a picture for you and help you

understand what we're doing at *LIFE Today*, and why it matters. Also, how it's changed the lives of so many, and how so many are waiting to see if anyone is listening to their cry.

Let me give you a little overview of how desperate the situation really is. Please watch this.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: The flashy glitzy night lights and young attractive girls may appear to be a pleasure-filled setting, but the reality is it is a place filled with danger, fear, and depraved people who deal in human flesh.

SHEILA: One of the girls told me that they keep them drugged up so they can't argue. I said, "What do they do if you argue?" That's when they get beaten.

Open Captions

>> If the girls won't sleep with our clients, we beat them with a bat, or we electrocute them until they obey.

Open Captions

>> They force me to service eight to ten men each night. And we are not allowed to eat or drink unless we do.

Open Captions

>> They said they would kill me if I didn't sleep with the men.

SHEILA: I'm sure for some of you, it's hard to wrap your mind around this. But let me tell you, if there is any place where the body of Christ should be showing up and caring for people, it's on the streets in this red-light district where these girls are being sold every night, time after time after time. You and I, as God's sons and daughters, we've got to be the ones telling these girls, "You have a future, and you have a purpose. And you have a hope, and there is a God who loves

you. And there are people on this planet who know this God and want to share this love with you."

Open Captions

>> I want freedom. I want to not live in hell anymore.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: "I want not to live in hell anymore." Have you ever heard someone that you know make that kind of cry? But these girls know that they are living literally in hellish situations. One or two of you have written to me over the years, and I understand your questions. Some of you have said, "Well, they're on the street. Why don't they just leave?"

Well, let me give you a little of their backstories. So many of these girls who sometimes are 14, 15, 16 years old when they are trafficked, when one of those guys that you saw on a motorbike grabs them one night and takes them to a place where they are drugged, and they wake up in the morning having slept with they don't even know how many men. When they try to get away, they're told, "You must remember, we know where you live."

Some of these girls have sisters who are 10, 8, 6. I sat down to a 12-year old girl who told me that she is the head of the family. Her mother left with a younger man. She has no idea where her mother is. Her father is in prison, but she has three siblings. And this beautiful 12-year old girl looked in my eyes and said, "If I escape, if I run away, if I don't do what they're telling me to do, they will go for my younger sisters." She's literally sacrificing her life for those that she loves.

And as I listened to her and prayed for her, my thought was, but we have a Savior who sacrificed his life so that we could be free. But not so that we could keep that freedom to ourselves. But so that we could go and reach, rescue, and restore. So let me explain how the whole system works here. It is very, very carefully thought out by our staff here and our partners on the ground.

The first thing we want to do is reach. Go into villages where these young girls are and teach them about the dangers out there. I remember going with our photographer, Janice, and listening to what these young girls were being told and being kind of shocked. It's like, this is hard stuff for little girls to hear. And Janice said to me, "This might be the most important day of their lives because they're being told what to avoid." Because sometimes these people will come to villages and say, "Hey, we can get you a great job in town." Or "If you haven't eaten a good meal in a while, why don't you come with us, and we will feed you." And these innocent girls go not realizing that the food is drugged, and they will wake up literally in prison.

So that's our first part. We go to the villages, and we teach these girls. Then comes the next part: Rescue. Where literally, our teams on the ground go in at midnight, knock down the doors, and rescue these girls. Then make sure the traffickers are arrested.

Then comes the long part of our commitment, which is: Restore. We will take these girls into safe houses and teach them, "You're not a number. You're not forgotten. Every prayer you prayed reached into heaven, and God has sent us to help you." And that's when these girls are restored.

Now you and I can do this together. At the moment, some of our generous partners have given us a matching gift of \$320,000. Usually, it would take about \$128 to begin that process of reaching, rescuing, or restoring. Now, if you're able to give \$64, that will do the same for one girl. So we've looked at a lot of girls. Why don't we take it down right now to the story of just one? Her name is Ria.

On the mission field

Open Captions

>> I remember waking up in a room alone, and later I saw other girls. I didn't know I had been sold until that day.

ANNOUNCER: Ria had a very happy childhood with a close-knit family and community until

the day everything changed. She was 18 when a close, trusted family friend asked her to travel with him to visit his wife. As they embarked on the trip, this friend offered her a cool drink on a hot afternoon. The next three days were a blur, and confusion gave way to fear when Ria realized she was locked in a brothel.

Open Captions

>> There was no way to escape. Even the windows didn't show the outside world.

ANNOUNCER: Ria initially refused to cooperate. Several days of severe beatings and starvation buried her will to fight and forced her to submit. Her new life placed her in a daily lineup, where her body was sold to as many as 12 men per day.

Open Captions

>> I felt like I was trapped in a cage. I used to think I would die there, and I would never see my family again.

ANNOUNCER: After years of isolation and enslavement, deliverance drew near. A targeted rescue effort successfully liberated Ria and a number of other girls.

Open Captions

>> I felt so free, like I was pulled out of hell and into heaven. I saw my family after such a long time and cried tears of joy.

ANNOUNCER: Thankfully, Ria has a new chance at life, but the work is not done. The tentacles of traffickers continue to spread throughout Asia and beyond, snagging untold thousands of daughters, sisters, friends. As the hands and feet of Jesus, our reach must extend farther, and our endurance must run deeper. Too many girls still need a lifeline.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: Did you hear what she said? "It was literally like I was pulled out of hell into heaven." And that's why we are here. Do you know that in the last few months, our partners on the ground have rescued more than 600 girls -- 600 girls! That news just blew me away. But there are so many more.

This is so central to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I want to read you a verse from Isaiah 61. It's verse one, and it says: *The spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me for the Lord has appointed me to bring good news to the poor. He sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.*

Now you might notice, you might remember that after Jesus had spent those 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the devil, being tested, everything thrown at him, he comes out of that experience, and he goes into the synagogue, and he stands up, and he repeats exactly those words from the book of Isaiah 61. You can read that in Luke chapter four. That's why Jesus came. He came to pay the price for your sin and for my sin. But that would not just be a ticket into heaven; it would transform the way we live. We would no longer live for ourselves, what made us feel good; that we were happy and safe and secure. No! That he would wash our eyes and unstop our ears so that we'd hear the cries of those who are suffering.

Yesterday, I just heard one of the most devastating stories from one of our partners on the ground about a five-year-old girl and a seven-year-old girl living in incredibly abusive situations in South Asia. They were to be sold to a brothel when our people on the ground, our boots on the ground in Jesus' name, went in and rescued them. And those two little lambs are now safely in a place where they're being cared for and loved; and told about the Jesus who loves them; and who sent them.

We can only do this with your help. There are so many. I mean, at five years old, seven, you should be starting school. The world should be opening up, not closing down into a prison. And because I know about this now, I will never stop telling their story.

But I'm asking you, will you help me? As I said, we have a \$320,000 matching gift from some incredibly generous partners who have been on this track with us for a while. So usually, \$128 would begin that process of reach, rescue, and restore for one child, but that will now be matched to save two girls. Some of you are able to do more. And if you are, I encourage you to do it. \$1280 will be matched and will now save 20 girls! Can you imagine that? Twenty girls are literally snatched from hell and taken into a place of freedom where they can discover for themselves that not only are they free from their chains, but they are free from everything and invited into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I have a brand-new book out called *Holding on When You Want to Let Go*. So for any gift at all, just ask for that book. It would be my honor to send it to you.

But please, this is urgent. This is going on right now. Little ones like that five- and seven-year old, about to be traded into a brothel, and we can't let that happen. Because when the love of Christ has filled you, when you've had a wave of the grace of God come over you, each one of us says, count me in, I want to do something, and I'm going to do it right now.

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 warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved, restore young lives and give them a future.

We have 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 the *Prayers For Life* Journal, a perfect book to write down your prayers as you reflect on your relationship with Christ. With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll also receive the N.I.V. Thinline Bible, along with 365 days of *Prayer For Life*, a beautiful devotional filled with scriptures and key thoughts for each day of the year. Keep all three resources close by for your daily prayer time as you meditate on God's Word.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280, which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

On the mission field

Producer: So, first, can you introduce yourself and tell us your name and what you do?

>> My name is Bella. And I work as a social worker in Siem Reap.

Producer: And what does it mean to be a social worker in Siem Reap?

>> It means that I go to KTV to find the girl and help them find a new job.

SHEILA: There is a popular form of recreation in Asia called karaoke television or KTV. These KTVs are advertised as places to sing with friends. But as I've seen with my own eyes, in many areas, the KTV is a front for human trafficking.

>> And a guy goes to sing. And then, if they want to have sex, they ask the girl, will they go with them? And they go. I know this feeling, you know.

Producer: How do you know that feeling?

>> Because I've been through... I used to... I used to do that too. So, I really know it, and clearly, it's not what they want.

SHEILA: Although she was trafficked herself at the age of 12, Bella was rescued and has since chosen to put her faith in Christ. Today, Bella fights to reach, rescue, and restore girls from sexual slavery.

>> You know, sometimes I tell them about my story. I said, "Before, I used to do that, too, and I know how it feels." I think if I'm without God, I'm nothing. So every day, I always thank God for this life.

SHEILA: Tonight, there is a girl about to endure another round of exhausting torment. Bella's life was changed when somebody chose to help her. That same opportunity is yours right now.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: Let me give you just a little update on Bella. Do you know that Bella now is married, and she has a daughter? She has a little girl who will never face the nightmare that Bella walked through. It's just who our God is. God is a redeemer who brings us out of the darkest places and changes our lives. And then, like Bella does every day now, she talks to girls because she understands, and she lets them know there is a way out.

Our partners on the ground are waiting for you and me to do something and to do something now. I'm incredibly blown away by James and Betty and their heart for people around the world. They don't look at an area and think, we'll just come in and do our thing. They seek God and say, "Who are you using in these situations, and how can we get behind them?" And that's what is happening in Southeast Asia and so many places around the world.

I've seen with my own eyes that this works. Honestly, like you, sometimes I've watched specials, and I thought, that looks really good. But I wonder if the money gets to where it needs to. I wonder if it really makes a difference. Does it last, or do the girls go back into a former life?

But I've seen it all. I've seen how reach works. I've stood there and listened as the teachers talked to these girls, showed them charts, and told them what to do if someone approached them with an offer. Then, they tell them to scream at the top of their voices and run!

And I've seen what happens with these girls being rescued out of the darkest places on earth. And I've seen what happens in that restoration process. I've been in our beautiful House of Destiny, sat with one of the girls on her bed as she picked up her guitar and began to play a worship song. It works! It makes a difference. It is changing lives every single day.

That's why I'm asking you, would you help us? And if you've helped before, would you help again? We have this wonderful matching gift of \$320,000. From those who have given sacrificially before, and honestly, I'm pretty sure they'll do it again because they want to help every single one of us do something. So \$64 matched will now begin that process of reaching, rescuing, and restoring a precious girl.

If you're able to do \$128, that will now, two girls -- two girls brought literally from hell into a place where they can be free to know Jesus. And if you're able to give \$1280, that will be matched, and 20 girls will be taken out of that nightmare or prevented from that ever happening to them.

I had the privilege at our House of Destiny of leading the Sunday morning worship, of speaking life to these young boys and girls. And as I sang "Amazing Grace" at the end, the words took on a whole new meaning. John Newton, who used to be a slave trader, after he was saved became someone who talked about the grace of God. That's who we are here at *LIFE*.

Will you join with us? Will you make the very best gift possible? Will you call now? Will you go online and make a gift? If you're writing a check, would you mind calling us and letting us

know that we have the funds we need to keep this life-changing, Jesus-inspired work happening every single day?

And then, it would be my profound honor in the weeks and months to come to bring you the stories of girls like Bella who now have a whole new life because you -- you made a difference. Thank you!

Begin video clip

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End of video

Begin video clip

Kirie: In the few days that I've been here on the border, I've watched a number of children being intercepted, stopped at the border, and returned to their families: little girls and little boys, children who are missed and loved at home.

I just want you to think about your own children, your grandchildren, your nieces, your nephews...all the people that you love. If you knew you could stop them from being taken into a situation that would forever change their lives to something that they would never be able to forget, to heartbreak that's not fixable, wouldn't you do that? Especially if all you had to do was pick up the phone, go online, and just make the best gift that you're able to give. We're not asking you to solve all the problems; we're just asking you to do your part.

Let's put a stop to this human trafficking. It's evil and it's wrong. And it's our responsibility to stand up now and to say "Enough!" Please help us.

In the studio

SHEILA: Thank you. Thanks for staying with me the whole time. I'm so grateful. I appreciate that. We all do. You see one or two of us in front of the camera, but we have a whole team of people who show up every day faithfully praying. And remember, we're here for you too.

I have written a new book called *Holding on When You Want to Let Go*. And it is about how God took me literally into the prison of a psychiatric hospital and set me free. But it is our hearts that we want to see so many set free. So you can ask for the book with any gift at all.

If you tried to get through and the lines are busy, which I hope they are, please keep doing it.

Don't quit. This is the work of the kingdom of God. We are his hands and feet; we are his boots on the ground. We will not let darkness win here. They are well-funded, but we are well-funded in Christ.

So please, keep calling, keep giving, and may God continue to bless you as you bless others. We love you!