

3/30/22

Week 14: Rescue LIFE

Sheila Walsh

Don't be afraid

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh.

One of the things that I'm really aware of at the moment is the number of people who are dealing with fear. Sometimes on a Sunday night, I'll jump on my Facebook page and do like a little Bible study but then I always read all the comments afterward.

A couple of Sundays ago I was so aware of that coming up over and over again, "Please pray for me because I'm afraid." It was for all sorts of different reasons but there just seemed to be two threads going through the whole, I don't know, about 500 comments. One was "I feel alone" but the more prevalent comment that night was "I feel afraid." I think that's one of the things that's hard to avoid living in this world, where so many things seem unpredictable. But I believe, I believe that when you and I have our trust in Jesus we can learn, it's not that fear won't approach us but we're not going to live there.

In fact, one of my favorite scriptures says this: *Don't be afraid for I am with you. Don't be discouraged for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*

Fear is a very primal emotion. When my brother and I, I guess he was about 16 so that would have made me 19, we were in Glasgow, Scotland one day and we took a train up from Ayr and we were just doing some Christmas shopping. We walked past this guy who was handing out pens to people. And so he handed one to Stephen and he took it and walked on. But it was one of those scams where I'll give you a pen but then I want \$5 or five pounds, it would have been for that. And Stephen, my brother was like no way; he

just kept walking. Well, the guy followed us and he was getting kind of angry. And Stephen was like, "You just gave her the pen. I'm not going to give you anything for it." Until Stephen saw me. I totally panicked and I started to cry. My brother immediately just gave the pen back to the guy.

My reaction was really out of proportion to what was going on. When we don't understand why we react the way we do, we will continue. A lot of it for me was from my early childhood. Obviously, for every child at some point or another, you're going to make your parents angry. You're going to do something disobedient, but because of my father's illness, because of his brain injury, his anger was out of proportion to anything that was actually happening. And so sometimes he would slap me, or he'd pull a big clump of my hair out or he would spit in my face. It made me realize you're really not safe. In fact, I think, there were probably three things that I internalized as a child, not even realizing. One: Anger is dangerous. It can lead to something way more disastrous. Number two: People, even those you love can't always be trusted. And number three: It is up to me to do whatever it takes to survive.

I read about a time when some of the greatest minds gathered to discuss what sets faith in Jesus Christ apart from every other religion. It was interesting, the conversation, because they talked about well, let's talk about incarnation. But some of the religious scholars said, well, there are religions that tell stories of God's appearing in human flesh. And they talked about, okay, well, let's go with the resurrection. But some said, no, there are stories about men supposedly coming back from the dead. But at that moment C.S. Lewis walked into the room and hearing what the discussion was about, he said, "Oh! That is easy! What differentiates Christianity from every other religion on the planet, is grace." It's the grace of God. It is love stooping down to you and to me.

Bono from U2, I read a quote of his the other day. He said, "Grace defies reason and logic. Love interrupts the consequences of your actions." I think that is so true. We get what we don't deserve.

So I thought today we could look at three truths. Truth #1: *Because of Jesus we get what we don't deserve.* And that is absolute grace. I love Psalm 103 and I want to read a few verses to you: *The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry, and filled with unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He does not purchase us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.*

Well, what about if you are afraid because you think I really messed up. It was interesting to me reading some things that people had written during the pandemic; feeling like somehow during that time they had fallen away from some of their better habits and messed up. Whether it stopped going to church, or started drinking, all sorts of things, and then feeling like, how can I expect the grace of God for where I find myself at the moment because I feel like I have messed up?

But one of my favorite things that Christ ever said before he went home to be with his Father, you'll find it in John 19, verse 30 where he said, "It is finished! Tetelestai! Ancient tax documents have been discovered from the time that Christ was on this earth and stamped across those documents is that word, "Tetelestai": Bill paid in full. Let that sink in. I don't know what your life is like. I don't know what some of the things you may have done that you think I should never have done that as a believer. Or I'm ashamed of who I am.

I got a letter from a woman who is in prison the other day. She said, "I grew up in the church and God was good to me. I was in a good family. But then I made one or two really foolish decisions. I got in with a wrong crowd and now I'm serving." And she told me the number of years for drug offenses. She said, "How can the grace of God reach me here?"

I love responding to letters like that because it is the best news in the world! It is like

Jesus took what he didn't deserve so that we don't get what we do deserve. If you're weighed down today by something that you think, this is unforgivable, I want you to know, that is a lie from the enemy.

One of the great joys and gifts in the Christian life is the gift of repentance when we simply say, Father, forgive me for my sin. That scripture tells us he removes it as far as the east is from the west and remembers it no more.

One of the things I've learned in my life is that walking close to Jesus puts fear in its place. It doesn't mean that there won't be fear, but it puts it in its place. One of my favorite stories that illustrates that is found in First Samuel chapter 17. It is the story of David and Goliath. I don't know if you know this story. If you don't, read the whole chapter. It is fascinating. Hollywood couldn't come up with anything better!

Let me give you a few basic facts, Goliath is over nine feet tall; he is a huge giant of a man. Now the king at that point in Israel is King Saul and he's taller than any other man in Israel. The tallest man in Israel only came up to his shoulders. And he is the only one with armor on that would be comparable with what Goliath is wearing. But Saul is terrified.

And then this shepherd boy, David shows up and David says, "I'll go and fight him." They're like, "There's no way you can." Saul tries to give him his armor and says, "Put this on." David says, "I can't wear this. This is way too heavy for me."

Here's my question to you. If you think about what's going on, you know we know the end of the story. We know that David kills Goliath. But think about what it must have been like. On one hill you have all the army of Israel, and it says they are all terrified, and then you have their king. On the other side, you've got the Philistine army with Goliath. The situation was incredibly tense.

But then you have this little shepherd boy. Why was David not afraid when King Saul

was? It is because David was walking closely with God. You know that's the difference. When you move out from underneath the shadow of God's protective presence, suddenly everything you're afraid of becomes so much bigger. That's why I love to remind myself and my friends and you, our family here, that we don't have to be afraid. God is bigger than any giant in your life.

If you read the chapter, you'll see, David doesn't say I'm this great soldier and I'm going to come and finish you off. He says, "I come in the name of the Lord of hosts." Find your protection in who he is.

Well, truth number two is this: *God always keeps His Word.* That's where David's confidence came from. We know the end of the story. We know what happened. But for that little boy at that point just going to toward him with a few pebbles and a little slingshot -- this is what you read in First Samuel 17, verse 41. Because Goliath is not thrilled that a shepherd boy is coming out to meet him. *Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. "Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his gods. "Come over here and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals," Goliath yelled.*

David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of heaven's armies -- the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied. Today -- pay attention to this -- today the Lord will conqueror you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I'll give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"

For us, we trust in the promises of God. We stand on the promises of God, not our own ability. I don't know what you might be facing today that has you anxious or apprehensive, but God is the rescuer of his people. And you'll know this. Sometimes God

will literally rescue us out of a situation. And sometimes God will rescue us in a situation.

Let me show you what I mean by that. That takes us to truth number three, whether you get the answer you pray for or the answer you fear. *God is always with you*, and His grace is enough.

When our son Christian was just a little boy, he went through a little period where he was having to have some tests in the hospital, and he looked like he was pretty sick. I was so terrified as a mom. I didn't expect to be able to have a child. Barry and I got married later in life, so I treasured this darling boy. The thought of him facing something that would be life-altering and perhaps take his life was overwhelming. I don't think I've ever prayed as much in my life. But the thing that I stood on in the midst of my fear was the promises of God. Because God didn't promise me that I would always get the answer I wanted, he did promise me that he would never leave me.

Well, eventually we got through that and discovered that Christian was going to be absolutely fine, and I was so thrilled. And then one day, I was speaking at a conference in Chicago, I think, and I shared that story. A lady came up to me at the end and she said, "You know what? Our child went through a similar thing, but we got the other answer." And she must have seen the color kind of drain out of my face because I thought, oh my gosh, I just rubbed salt in an open wound. I think she saw my response and she said, "No, no, no, Sheila. You don't understand. What I'm trying to tell you is whether you get the answer you long for or the answer you fear, God's grace is enough."

You see, so often we think, what we want is answers. What I've discovered in my own life is what I want is the presence of God. Answers might give me information, the presence of God changes everything -- changes everything!

In Exodus 33, there is a really interesting story where God is tired of his people who constantly rebel. He brought them out of Egypt, he's brought them so far but all they do is complain and rebel. This is what the Lord says. *The Lord said to Moses, "Get going, you*

and the people you brought up from the land of Egypt. But I will not travel among you, for you're a stubborn and rebellious people."

Can you imagine that? In verse 15, *Moses says this: Then Moses said, "If you don't personally go with us, don't make us leave this place."*

I mean it was everything they'd been promised, but without God, it would mean absolutely nothing. If you're like me, at times we think what we need is just an answer to this prayer. But I've discovered what I need is the presence of the Lord. Yep! Answers give information, they give us a solution, but the presence of Christ brings peace.

So let me just refresh you on those three things. *Because of Jesus, we get what we don't deserve.* And that's grace. *Number two: God always, always keeps his promises.* We can trust his word. And number three: Whether you get the answer you pray for or the answer you fear, *God is always with you.*

Let me pray for you. Father, I just pray right now for everyone watching this program or listening in. Lord, you know exactly where they are, what situation they find themselves in. Lord, you know that the enemy loves to bring fear right into our face and make us think we're not going to make it through this, that everything is out of control. But we refuse to believe that because you are good, you are God, you are in control, and you have promised peace to your people. So I ask that for every single one right now who is tuning in, that they would open their hearts to receive your peace and your presence. Because Lord, your presence changes everything. Thank you for loving us. Thank you that we don't get what we deserve. We get what we don't deserve and that is your grace. Thank you, in Jesus's name. Amen.

We have some people right now who are desperately in need of some grace, of some love, of some light, and you and I get to be an answer to their prayer. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Open Captions

>> I was really scared and afraid. I was so young, and I did not know anything. The men forced me to do bad things and I could not find any help.

>> Girls? How old do you want?

>> Young.

>> How old?

>> What's the youngest?

>> Huh?

>> The youngest.

ANNOUNCER: Sex trafficking of young women and children is one of the darkest and most depraved activities of humankind on the planet today. There are nearly five million victims who have been forced into prostitution. And the majority of those are women and children.

>> These are kids that have been forced to have sex with people and they're being abused and they're being photographed and doing things that no child should ever have to do.

Open Captions

>> They blindfolded me and put me into a van. When we arrived, I was put in a room with two sets of locks. There I was forced to sleep with men.

ANNOUNCER: Mission: Rescue Life was born over a decade ago to do our part in

helping shine the light of God's love into these dark and depraved areas. We're partnering with missionaries around the world who are rescuing those bound in slavery. Even former trafficking victims like Bella are helping those in need.

>> 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.

>> So when we look at these big numbers of statistics and they're just demotivating, what we choose to do is we just choose to focus on the one. We work alongside law enforcement and so we rescue one today, we rescue one tomorrow, we rescue one next week. Because every single child matters to God and so they then have to matter to us.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: I love that! One child at a time, one life at a time. Somebody said to me the other day, "Do you ever get discouraged because it just seems like a drop in the bucket?" I'm like, "Well, the bucket's getting wetter every single day." And there are people right now who are desperate.

I love Bella! I love the fact that even though she has been rescued she is now part of the solution for other young girls. And she can say, "I understand. I've been there." I also loved when she said, "Without Jesus, I am nothing." Me too, Bella! Me too!

Let me read this to you from Psalm ten, this is verse 17: *Lord, you know the hopes of the helpless. Surely you will hear their cries. You will bring justice to the orphans and the oppressed so that mere people can no longer terrify them.*

This is something that is the privilege of those of us who have been redeemed and rescued. That's what Jesus did for us. He reached down, he rescued us, and he is restoring

us to become more like him, and we get to do that for these girls. We get to reach, we get to go into the villages and warn them and prepare them and equip them. We get to rescue, as you saw in that video, literally going in and dragging these girls to freedom. And then to restore them. It's simply another way of us doing the very thing that Jesus has done for us.

This is so important to us here at *LIFE* because we've heard the cries of these girls. And we have some amazing people at the moment who have said they will put up a matching gift of \$320,000. That simply means that for every dollar you're able to give, they'll match that. Usually, it takes about \$128 to begin that process of reach, rescue, or restore. And if you're able to do that now that will be for two girls whose prayers have been heard. If you can give \$64 that will be matched and one girl will know that God heard her prayers and sent us.

Don't you think it is our very D.N.A. as believers? The whole idea of reach, rescue, and restore is like God looked down from heaven and said to Jesus, I want you to go down and I want you to reach them, and I want you to rescue them, and I want you to restore them. And if he has done that for you, let's do that physically for these girls. And then we've earned the right to tell them, God heard your prayers and we came in his name. There is a God who wants to be your savior.

So please, will you call that number on your screen? Will you give the very best gift you possibly can? This is happening right now. This isn't the past or the future -- this is right now. Our people are on the ground waiting to receive the help they need to do this work. Please call. Give the best gift you can. Thank you.

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:

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! Thanks for staying with me to the end of the program. I know sometimes it is tempting when you get to hard things to just kind of flip through channels, but you didn't. So thank you, well done!

And if you tried to get through and our lines were busy, then please keep calling. Remember for this time, for this season, we have this matching gift, and we want to maximize that. We want to see so many girls reached, rescued, and restored in Jesus's name. It is who we are as the body of Christ. It's what motivates us and moves us.

Maybe you're thinking, I can't go and do that. No, but we can go in your name. Thanks for being with us! We love you and we'll see you next time on *Life Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh, God bless you.