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Week 21: Spring Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

"Names of God"

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad you joined us. I was in the doctor's office the other day just for my annual physical. I was sitting in the waiting room and a young girl a couple of seats down from me said, "Oh, here's the latest whatsoever magazine," I can't remember the name of it. "It's amazing." And she had handed it to me. So I thanked her, and I'm flipping through it and thought, there is nothing in here that A, I'm vaguely interested in or B, that would help me in any area of my life.

You will never find me saying that if you hand me your copy of the Word of God. No matter whether I'm in a good place or a hard place. No matter whether I feel close to the Lord or don't feel close to the Lord, I always, always, always find something that will impact my life because this is the living Word of God.

And if you know me very well, you know that I love the Psalms. I love studying when they were written, what was happening in the life of the author, as you know, over 50 of them were written by David but also the sons of Korah, King Solomon, and Moses wrote a beautiful Psalm, Psalm 90. In fact, Psalm 90, verse one is so lovely. It says: Lord, through all the generations you have been our home. Isn't that a beautiful thought? You have been our home.

So what was happening in and around them when they wrote each particular Psalm is something that I love to study. But here's something I discovered not so long ago, Psalms 22, 23, and 24 are a trio that goes together. They're often called "The Shepherding Psalms." Psalm 22 gives us the Good Shepherd who gives his life for his sheep. Psalm

23, the Chief Shepherd guides his people through the wilderness of this life. And Psalm 24, the Great Shepherd who is coming back in glory.

But let me just read you a couple of bits so you know exactly what I'm speaking about. Psalm 22, the Good Shepherd who gives his life for his sheep. Here it says, this is Psalm 22 verse one: *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I've groaned for help?* And then if you go over to verse 16: *They have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. My enemies stare at me and gloat. They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing.* You'll probably remember that when Christ was on the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He wasn't remembering Psalm 22, he was living it.

And then Psalm 24, before we hone in on Psalm 23, is all about our returning king, the Great Shepherd who is coming back for his sheep. It says, this is verse seven: *Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter.*

Well, I have always loved, ever since I was a wee girl growing up in Scotland, I have always loved Psalm 23. But it wasn't until fairly recently, doing a deep study, that I realized there are so many names of God in that one Psalm alone. So I thought I could share some with you.

Let me just read you the first verse: *The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.* That's *Jehovah-Raah: The Lord, my shepherd.* This is one of the most powerful and personal names of God. It is one of my very favorites because it is so tender and so loving. I don't know if you know this, but shepherds in Israel love their sheep. They give each one a name. And each day, the shepherd will go ahead of his flock to make sure the path was clear, that there was no potential danger ahead. But at nighttime, he would count each one as they came into the pen to make sure that no one was missing or hurt. And when they were all gathered in, the shepherd would sleep in front of the opening. The message was clear, if you want to get to the sheep you have to go through me. That's who Christ is for each one of us who've placed our trust -- he knows your name and he

watches over you day and night.

It says he lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. *Jehovah-Jireh: The Lord, my provider.* I have all that I need. The first time that this name is used for God is in Genesis chapter 22. And it is one, personally, I find harder stories to read as a parent. Abram and Sarai had longed for a child for so many years. It seemed impossible but then God intervened. Sarah was 90 years old when she gave birth to that promised son, Isaac. Well, then God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Can you imagine how painful that must have been? We don't know how old Isaac was at the time, but trusted biblical scholars agree that he wasn't a little boy; that he was anywhere between 20 and 30 years old. He had to be strong enough to carry a sufficient amount of wood up a mountain to fully consume a human body. Abraham, by faith, trusted God. He was being tested to see if he truly trusted God's promise that through this young man, Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars.

As you probably remember, as Abraham was about to plunge the knife into his son God stopped him. Then Abraham saw a ram whose horns were caught in a thicket and the ram became the sacrifice. We read in Genesis 22:14: Abraham named the place Jehovah-Jireh, which means the Lord will provide. This was a foreshadowing of the truth that just as that ram took Isaac's place, Christ would be the provided lamb as a perfect sacrifice for every one of us. I have all that I need.

Then *Jehovah-Shalom: The Lord, my peace.* He lets me rest in green meadows. Well, the first time this name appears in the Bible is actually in Judges chapter 6. The angel of the Lord appeared to a young man named Gideon and told him that he would be the one who would deliver his people from their enemies. Gideon was terrified! And he asked for a sign that the messenger was really from God. He asked the angel, not realizing that this was an Old Testament appearance of Christ. So he asked this angel to wait until he could come back with a meal. We're not talking like a pizza here, mind you. We're talking a whole goat. How long does this take to roast a goat?

Well, when he finally came back, Christ touched the meal with the tip of his staff and fire consumed it all, and then he disappeared. When Gideon realized that he had been talking, not just to an angel but to the angel of the Lord, he was sure he was going to die. But the Lord told him he was not going to die. So Gideon built an altar and named it Jehovah-Shalom: The Lord is peace. Christ's presence was peace to Gideon that day and he offers you that very same peace to you right now today.

Then there's *Jehovah-Rophe: The Lord, my healer*. Where the Psalmist says: He renews my strength. That name Rophe or Rapha means the Lord is my healer physically and spiritually. The thing that is so fascinating about this name is that unlike Jehovah-Jireh or Jehovah-Shalom where God's people give him a name, it was God himself who revealed this name to the children of Israel. He told them that he is Jehovah-Rophe after they crossed the Red Sea. "For I am the Lord who heals you." Well, on the cross that healing was perfected. But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

Then we come to the next one, *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*. And I'm not sure about the pronunciation, that could be wrong but that's as close as I'm going to get. But it means: *The Lord is our Righteousness. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name*. From verse three of Psalm 23. The prophet Jeremiah looking ahead to the day when Jesus our Messiah would come to save his people wrote, "*In those days and at that time I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. On that day, Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this will be its name: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'*"

No matter what you have done in your life, no matter how often you have promised the Lord you'd do one thing and then you've fallen down again, you've failed, when Christ is your Savior, I want you to know he alone is your righteousness. He makes you right with God.

And I come to the next name: *The Lord is my Helper: Jehovah-Ezer. Your rod and your*

staff protect and comfort me. We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help, our Ezer, and our shield. I love the way that Charles Spurgeon kind of flushes that idea out. This is what he wrote: "Men can come to our help, but they travel slowly, creeping along the earth. Lo, our God comes riding on the heavens! They who travel on the earth may be stopped by enemies, they certainly will be hindered. But he that rides upon the heavens cannot be stayed nor even delayed. When Jehovah's excellency comes flying upon the sky on the wings of the wind, how gloriously are displayed the swiftness, the certainty, and the all-sufficiency of delivering Grace. God has ways to help us that we dream not of."

What a beautiful, beautiful concept. Then we come to *Jehovah-Nissi: The Lord, my standard of victory. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies*. The full meaning of this name can be kind of hard to grasp because clearly, we're not at an all-you-can-eat buffet surrounded by enemies. So what does it mean? Well, in Exodus chapter 17, verse 15 we read this: *Moses built an altar there and named it Jehovah-Nissi (which means "the Lord is my banner")*.

You might remember Moses, Joshua, and the children of Israel were in a fierce battle with a hostile desert tribe. They were constantly crossing lands where they were not welcome, and they had to fight for their very survival. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill. As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hands, the Amalekites gained the advantage. Well, Moses' arms soon became so tired he couldn't hold them up any longer. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses holding up his hands; so his hands held steady until sunset. As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

Remembering how God has delivered us in the past is a wonderful spiritual discipline. I call it "redemptive remembering." You might even want to find a little stone in your yard and write a word or a date on it to remind you that God delivered you once and he can do it again.

One of the next names is *Jehovah-Mekadesh, the Lord who sanctifies me. You honor me by anointing my head with oil.* In the Old Testament, the children of Israel had 613 laws that they had to keep to be holy in God's sight. Interestingly enough, there were 365 don'ts, that's the number of days in a year, and 248 do's, that's the number of bones in the human body. *So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I am the Lord your God. Keep all my decrees by putting them into practice, for I am the Lord who makes you holy.* That's the instructions given to them in Leviticus chapter 20, verses 7-8.

Can you even imagine the burden of waking up every day with 613 laws to keep? But here's the great news. For us, it's Christ who makes us holy. Now, he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. That's how Paul reminded the church in Colossae. We're not saved by trusting in our own goodness or holiness, we are saved by trusting in his.

Then we come to *Jehovah-Manah: The Lord is my portion. My cup overflows with blessings.* Over and over, the writer of the Psalm says, "The Lord is my portion." Psalm 73, verse 25, we read, *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

I want to live like that. I want to live with total, absolute devotion to Christ, soaking my life in the truth of His Word. Whatever you feel as if you might be lacking today, I want to remind you that the Lord is your portion. And then, finally, *Jehovah-Cheleq: The Lord is my inheritance. Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.* We find this name of God in Deuteronomy chapter 18, when the land God gave to his people was divided among the tribes of Israel, the only tribe that received no land were the Levites. They were the ones who led in worship. And this is what God said about them: *They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them.* I love that! What a gift to those who led in worship, now that gift is for everyone

who trusts in Christ. The Lord himself is your inheritance. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance and his holy people, and his incomparably great power for those who believe.

I cannot commend highly enough, A, studying the Word of God, but B, studying the Psalms, reading them out loud, asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh revelation. Write down, if there is a passage or verse that speaks to you particularly, write it down. Maybe put a date beside something in your Bible and say, praying for this or praying for that. And then you can revisit that and see how the Lord has been faithful. But remember, the Lord is our shepherd. He is not *a* shepherd, he is *our* shepherd. I love that David made it so personal: The Lord is my shepherd.

Whatever you are facing today, I want you to know you are not alone. That the Lord himself will shepherd you through. You might want to take a moment and read Psalms 22, 23, and 24 and get the bigger picture. The shepherd who died for us so that we can be free, the shepherd who is with you and I right now, to shepherd us through this earth no matter what else changes, and our soon-returning shepherd.

I think one of the reasons at *LIFE* that we're so committed to having our eyes opened to see the needs of others is because the shepherd has been so kind and so gracious to us. And when our eyes have been opened, we see the people he cares about, who need our help so desperately. And we get to be the hands and the feet of the Good Shepherd to those who are crying out for help right now. Would you watch this? And then I will come back and tell you how you and I can make such a difference.

On the mission field

ISAK: In these areas of southern Angola, they're facing the worst drought in over 40 years, crops that have failed year after year. One and a half million people are facing

severe hunger; 114,000 children under the age of five right now are suffering from acute malnutrition.

And we see it when we visit the malnutrition clinics here. Literally, over-filled clinics with children fighting for their lives. Nine days ago this grandmother, Duonece, brought her grandson Jhar to this clinic, literally because he was battling the battle of life and death; fighting for his life because he had acute malnutrition. How, you might ask? Because she didn't have any food to feed him. When I asked her about her food situation, she became very emotional. Explained to me that there are as many days where she has no food to feed him that they go without food. That's how a child like this ends up with his skin literally peeling off his body, as the body starts to shut down, trying to just keep him alive. But we're seeing more and more children suffering like little Jhar, many of them dying in villages before we can ever reach them.

What is the solution, you say? This is it. The solution is food, and us being here as mission teams reaching these children, each and every one of them, getting to these mothers, answering their prayers, and saving their children's lives.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: I'll never forget my first trip to Angola and what I saw there. I know that you have been, many of you have been with us for years and you care about the situation. The situation has never been worse. This is the worst drought that they have experienced in over 40 years. I remember just a couple of years ago going with some of these moms and scraping through the dry earth to see if there was anything -- anything that would have any basic nutrition or even just something to put in their little one's tummies. There was precious little then, and there is even less now.

Here's the thing that is just amazing to me. This is something that you and I can do something about. When James and Betty established Mission Feeding so many years ago,

they did it because they believed it was our joy as believers to make a difference. And they have continued for years. What would give these children, when we set up the Mission Feeding program in a village, is special -- it looks a little like oatmeal or soup, but it is specially made for children in that area of the world with the protein and the vitamins they need for strength.

But when we were first doing it, they were showing up with cans that A, for a start, when you put something hot in a can, it's going to burn you. But not only that, some children would show up with a can about the size -- and be able to get a decent meal. Some children were showing up with literally the kind of thing you would give your cat food in. One little one even arrived just with a lid. And so that's why we came up with this great solution -- bowls! It says "*LIFE Outreach*" on the bottom of the bowl. Do you want to join us today and give hope in a bowl?

See I've seen it. You're asking me how do you know it works? Because I've been there! I've been in that malnutrition clinic and watched these poor little ones where the skin is literally peeling off their bodies and their hair is turning a strange color, and they don't have the energy to cry. But then I've gone to the villages on the same trip where Mission Feeding has already been established, and I've had the privilege of being the one to fill the bowls and hand it to the children. And they just look like our children did when they were little. They're laughing and singing and dancing and sitting under the shade of a tree and enjoying this meal that has changed their life -- from death to life.

Please will you join us today? Will you help us fill these bowls? \$30 will feed three children, not for a day but three whole months. \$50 will feed five. \$100 will feed ten. As Betty once said, let's make sure the line of children is never longer than the food we have to put in these bowls. Please call now. Give the best gift you can. Give hope in a bowl!

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.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. 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.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *The Chosen*: 40 days with Jesus. From the creators of the widely popular television drama, *The Chosen*, this devotional invites you to discover Jesus through the eyes of those who knew him best. With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Amazing Grace" sheet music framed wall art. This timeless and well-beloved hymn can be displayed as a reminder of God's grace to you. 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, "Let the Children Come." This beautiful bronze is a reminder to care for children around the world in both word and deed.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

On the mission field

ISAK: As we've traveled around these communities in southern Angola, family after family has told us how they're experiencing the worst drought they've ever seen. Statistically, it is the worst drought in over 40 years. Families tell us of how their crops have failed, of how they're running out of food. You can see when you look at these crops, you can see why these crops have failed. There is no life in here. There is no way that these crops can produce any food. This swale is literally just dry. No life in it at all. Failed crops though mean failed lives. And as there is no life left in this soil, if we're not

able to respond here soon this drought will not just steal the life in the soil but the life in the communities.

So please, I'm asking you to dial that number on your screen or get online and give the very best gift you can today to give the gift of life by giving the gift of food to these mothers and their precious children here in Angola that so desperately need our help.

In the studio

SHEILA: Thank you! Thank you so much! Please keep calling. Please just give the very best gift you can! Our partners are literally, Isak is there, our partners are on the ground in Africa ready to fill those bowls. What a joy that we get to do that.

So from all of us here at *Life Today*, thank you for being with us. Remember, we pray for you too! And we look forward to seeing you next time on *Life Today*.