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Week 24: Spring Mission Feeding last week

Sheila Walsh

Kathie Lee Gifford #2

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh; I'm so glad you stopped by. I have a feeling you will be too. Our dear friend, Kathie Lee Gifford, has a fantastic new book out. It is called *The Jesus I Know*: "Some amazing conversations." So welcome, Kathie. Thank you for being with us.

KATHIE: I always love to be with you, Sheila. Thank you for showcasing this book. It is unlike any other book I've ever written. I let other people tell their stories.

I usually write other people's stories, but I said no, I'm going to sit down with these amazing people that the Lord has blessed me with. Some of them were in my life for decades, like Kris Jenner. Or like for the last 20 years like a Kristin Chenoweth. Others are a gentleman who was just here from Australia that I was privileged to lead to the Lord in a hotel lobby here just a couple months ago; I wanted him to share his story. So it's a motley crew, as we've discussed in another show. A motley crew of individuals at different points in their walk, their journeys because God is such an individual, personalized custom-made God. We're all at different points in our journey, and our stories are not always tied up neatly with a bow. Sometimes there is a dot dot dot. Sometimes there is a question mark, sometimes there is a couple of exclamation points. But there is no "the end" until the end.

SHEILA: Absolutely!

KATHIE: We write people off -- we write them off, don't we, Sheila, if they don't worship like we do? If they speak in tongues and we think that's not of the Lord. If they call God by a

different name -- whatever they do. I'm not trying to dilute down the gospel or the Word of God. I'm trying to dig, dig, dig deeper into what the Word of God actually says to us about these people that come into our life that we love, and yet they're different than we are. They look different. They sound different.

But I have found that the greatest trips I've ever taken rabbinically to Israel, or when I go with people that I say, Lord, let's not fill this bus with people I want to come. Let's fill this bus with people that you want because they need you, they need to know you, they need to come to the land of *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi* and meet you in a personal way they never dreamed was possible.

So you'll hear stories of my friend Rocky who was raised in a Hindu home -- brilliant, brilliant woman. Her daughter had cancer. Her husband came, and he is a Sikh. Neither one of them you would call followers of Jesus. But then you find out what happened to them while they were in the Holy Land studying him, and then learning about him and hearing the stories. You hear how they changed and how they went home with a different view. I didn't do anything except take them there, invite them there in the love of Jesus.

And then there are Scientologists. One of my biggest, most often collaborator in music is a brilliant composer named David Pomeranz, Jewish, who had been a Scientologist for 40 years. He's married to a woman who used to be Catholic but who became a Scientologist. They adopted a child and raised him, of course, in Scientology. So how the Holy Spirit dealt with the three of them on our trip -- let's just put it this way. When I was shooting *The Way*, this new movie that I have, and I wanted 12 young men to play the disciples. So David and his son, Nicholas, end up as two of the disciples in the boat on the way to the other side. So yeah, stories like that. But then there are stories about people like Jimmie Allen.

SHEILA: I love that story!

KATHIE: Jimmie Allen's story is unbelievable. He's just amazing! He is *the* rising star in country music. I met him on The Today Show a couple years ago. I said, all right, that guy's

going to be one of my closest friends for the rest of my life. And that's what he is. I just adore Jimmie. His story is very, very moving.

So just people like that. Again, it wasn't me saying, Lord, I want to get my biggest friends, stars, dot dot dot. I said, But no, Lord, who do you want to tell their story? He gives me names. I pray over it, and then I seek him. And only one person that he gave for me to ask couldn't do it -- actually, two, I'm thinking now. One was Regis's wife, Joy, because she had just been asked to do her own book, and of course, she was going to save the story for that.

But the other was a new friend of mine named Alon. And he is Jewish by birth and faith, who had an encounter recently with Jesus, a few years ago, a literal visitation from him. It's the way I end the book. It is quite amazing because he didn't want to write his whole story; he is not ready yet. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

Why do we think it's our job to tell people how to live out their faith? If they want our opinions, let them ask us. Otherwise, if we could just love people. And then when they ask for our opinion, if we could deliver it with love and gentleness and a tender spirit, like the Bible says to do, what a world we'd live in. Was it Saint Francis of Assisi who said, "Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary, use words?"

SHEILA: [Laughing] Yeah! One of the conversations you have in the book, in fact, I think it is the first one, is your conversation with Kristin Chenoweth. That's just beautiful. So you've been friends for years?

KATHIE: You mentioned this cross that I wear; I can't get up closer. You've seen it before. I never take it off -- I never take it off. She was wearing it one day, and I went, "Oh my gosh! That's the most beautiful cross I've ever seen, Kristin. Where can I get one of those?"

She goes, "You can't." You know how she is, "You can't."

[Laughter]

I said, "Oh!" She said, "I designed it, and it's mine. But I'll give it to you."

She starts to take it off and give it to me on the set. I go, "No! I'm not going to take it. I'm not going to take it. But I love it. You're so dear!"

Two days later, maybe, two of them show up in the mail, one for me and one for my daughter. And so people don't know that Kristin was adopted and raised by two amazing parents in Oklahoma. She has this incredible gift God gave her. She realized she was a different kind of missionary. She's like I am in the sense that God uses us in the entertainment world; that's our mission field. I was judged my whole life for that. Some of the worst, most painful, and damaging comments to me in my life came from Christian people.

SHEILA: Yeah, I believe it.

KATHIE: I say "Christian" in quotes because real Christians don't do that. They don't do that. They'll encourage and pray for you if they really care about you. They will pray for you.

SHEILA: What was the most surprising conversation that you had? What was the one that perhaps, wow, I didn't anticipate this?

KATHIE: Cynthia Garrett, maybe.

SHEILA: I love her! She is a friend of mine.

KATHIE: Yes, Cynthia Garrett. I've only just met her. She is new; a lot of people have moved to my area in Tennessee from California to get away from a lot of things, looking for the Promised Land, which used to be California. So anyway, she is one of them. She and her husband Roger, who also has his testimony in the book. He set out as a young man to completely dispel the Bible, to debunk it completely. So his story is great.

But Cynthia is this beautiful, tall, elegant, African American woman who has had success in the television world and different things, hosting things and stuff. You'd look at her, she is very chic, she's very hip, and she's very cool. And Lenny Kravitz is like her spiritual brother; they grew up together. She is like the coolest girl in the room. She loves Jesus -- loves Jesus! And when she told me her story, I was blown away by it. Blown away! I think that's the one that surprised me the most.

SHEILA: Yeah, her story of being in prison and all -- but it just convinced me one more time or deepened my understanding of the powerful work of the Holy Spirit. That he seeks us out, and we're never alone. I love that. And I love the fact that God has given you a mission field that is different from -- when I was growing up in a small Baptist church it was like if you're a guy, you can be a pastor. If you're a woman and you want to serve the Lord, you can be a missionary. That was it, not realizing --

KATHIE: Or a teacher -- Sunday School teacher.

SHEILA: Or if you play piano, you're really in big.

KATHIE: Well, you could do almost anything!

[Laughter]

SHEILA: But understanding that we're on mission 24/7, no matter where we are, to me is just -- it's a calling.

KATHIE: It's life-changing. It gives your life purpose, which so many people don't feel. I don't have any-- I have no purpose. I have no -- I can't do that. No! You have a mission field. Get on your knees and seek God, and he will show you. He's looking; he needs workers in the field. The harvest is ready, but the workers are few. And he's just waiting. You have a special call on your life that you're waiting on. Be proactive about it. Seek the Lord, say, Lord, I know you want me to serve you. I have a zeal in my heart to serve you. Show me where you want. Do you think God

is going to say no to that prayer? I don't think so.

SHEILA: The friendship you have with people in the natural like Brian Welch of Korn. I loved your conversation with him! There was such tenderness in it and such tenderness in him toward the Lord.

KATHIE: Oh, he -- people just laugh. You're friends with Brian "Head" Welch of Korn? One of the biggest hard metal bands in the world? How could you be his friend?

I said, "Have you met him? How could I not be his friend? He loves Jesus."

His testimony, I wasn't surprised by it because we'd been friends for long enough that I knew his. You can go to a documentary called *Loud Crazy Love* that is about him and his struggles to get out of that world, and those addictions and that darkness; and his journey with his daughter is a precious part of his -- it was his daughter he wanted to get clean for. He had a child in the middle of this insanity of his life. And the cleanliness of her and the purity of her, he just felt... Well, he's tattooed every inch of his body, even his eyelids. Everything on him is tattooed. And dreadlocks down past his bum.

[Laughter]

But a sweeter soul you will never meet. A more devoted heart for God you will never find.

These are the people -- these are God's children, and we judge for all kinds of reasons. I do it; we all do it. We have biases. That doesn't make us systemically racist in my book. It just means we have come from a different world and have to find what we have in common with one another. Go into another person's world, be willing to.

Jesus said, "Go to the other side." He was going to their world. But when they got to the other side and Jesus got out of the boat because there was a guy bleeding and cutting himself and running and demon-possessed. His name was Legion, and that means so many -- so many

demons. When Jesus healed him of everything, the demoniac wanted to get in the boat and go back with Jesus. You can imagine why he would.

And Jesus said, "No, no. Go back to your village. Go back to your family and friends and tell them what your God has done for you this day." He was the first missionary, really.

SHEILA: Absolutely!

KATHIE: Go back to your world, or go out, but I love it that this guy's cleaned up. He's sitting there all dressed and clean. Can you imagine the shock when he went back to his village? Who knows how long he had been in those caves and terrifying people? For a long time, probably. They don't even recognize him until they finally do. The scripture says that they believed; the villagers were transformed by the word of his testimony.

SHEILA: One of the things I love, too, is some of the stories you tell. It shows that no matter your walk of life, God has a plan and a mission. I love your story about Hubie Synn, the reluctant prophet.

KATHIE: The reluctant prophet, Hubie Synn. Yes, I love Hubie!

SHEILA: I remember meeting him for the first time and thinking, he just looks like an accountant. He doesn't look like --

KATHIE: He is an accountant! He is an accountant from New Jersey!

[Laughter]

But he has a secret life.

SHEILA: He does, indeed. But dramatic! I love that. Because so often we think, certain people are in ministry. But no, God wants to use every single one of us to shine his light and his love.

KATHIE: My friend, Joanne Moody. Look up Joanne Moody; this is a woman who for almost 15 years had been so damaged in childbirth that there was irreparable nerve damage. She lived with I think she was on eight opioids daily for 14 and a half years and still could get no relief from her pain. She was miraculously healed. Miraculously -- like gone!

She said, "Lord, I will travel wherever you send me and heal others in your name." And the ministry she has now is unbelievable -- Joanne Moody.

I wanted to introduce Hubie and Joanne for a reason. There is so much misunderstanding of the gifts of the Spirit in the western world. There is so much mystery surrounding it, and there shouldn't be because once you understand the people, meet the people that have these gifts, and you see the way they use them for the kingdom of God, any bias you have about it is dispelled. Because you see what's being done in the name of the Lord Jesus. And you cannot say this is not God. This is redemption. This is healing. And nobody is getting the credit for it but Almighty God.

We have to test the spirits for sure, but I think for way too long, we as westerners have been too terrified of the gifts of the Spirit. Actually, when you read about them, when Paul talks about them, we're all supposed to have gifts of the Spirit. They're supposed to be different; used like different parts of the body for one good work. But we're all supposed to use them. And people go, "God doesn't do that anymore."

Really? Jesus said, "Greater things than this you will do in my name when the Holy Spirit comes. But I have to go so you can do them." He didn't put a timeframe on that. We do.

We're the ones that box God in, that relegate him to three dimensions, that stick him on a shelf and say, "Well, that's what God does." Really?

Go to Mozambique and watch Heidi Baker raise people from the dead in the name of Jesus. Let's open our eyes, our ears, our hearts, and our souls to the great works the Holy Spirit is doing in

the lives of brothers and sisters all over the world.

We don't see much of it here in our country because we don't have the faith. Jesus said, "Your faith has healed you." I'm not saying everybody that doesn't get healed doesn't have the faith for it, but faith is a component of it -- a huge component.

Anyway, I wanted people to get to know people like that in this book and not be afraid of them.

SHEILA: Yeah! Beautiful! When people finish this book, Kathie Lee, when they close this, what is your prayer for each person that reads this?

KATHIE: I talk about that a little bit in the book at the very end. That people will welcome people like that into their lives and into their hearts and into their worlds. People that look different than you. People that go to a different church or no church at all. People that worship differently. People who sometimes call God by a different name, and we call that blasphemy; get to know them and see what they say about that god. Then, you'll have something to talk to them about in love and with tenderness and kindness. People, in my experience, have never come to know Christ in a powerful personal way because I've told them they're going to go to hell.

SHEILA: No!

KATHIE: No! I tell them that God loves them just as they are. And if they will come to him and seek him, he will be found by them. He lives to be found by them. And he wants to love you and transform your life into everything he ever created you to be. We're supposed to love people into the kingdom of heaven, not condemn them.

SHEILA: Absolutely! So as you can probably see, you're going to want to get a hold of this book for yourself, and I'm going to tell you how you can do that. But first of all, I would love for you to help us bring some hope to some women at the moment who are praying that someone is listening to their prayer, and we can be the answer to that prayer. Watch this.

On the mission field

Announcer: Some see suffering like this and say it proves God is not real; or worse, that he exists but he is indifferent to the suffering of the people he made. But the truth is it's in these very situations that the hand of God is most present, and you can see him if you look with the right eyes.

God is here in the hands of a mother doing all she can to sustain a sick child. He's here in the hands of doctors and nurses holding back the onslaught of death in their countries. And he's here in the hands of the missionaries who give all just to see one more life saved.

But we can't do it alone. To touch those areas of greatest need requires help from people like you because, in the end, the extent to which we can be the hands of God, is in yours.

End of clip

In the studio

SHEILA: No child should ever get to that state. No child should be so weak that it can barely cry or struggle to take a breath when we have so much in our country. When you think about it, we have so much. Now, we have an amazing opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people who are not asking for a lot but just asking for the ability to feed their child.

This is our last week of Mission Feeding. So please, would you help us today? And for any gift at all, you can ask for Kathie Lee's book, *The Jesus I Know*. But *The Jesus I Know* says to me, care for these children. Reach out. Let these mothers -- the thing that blows me away, I found such faith in these places where there is such pain and suffering. You would think that maybe women struggling, watching a child die would lose faith in a good God. But that is not my experience. The mothers I have met have talked to me about the fact that they pray every night that God will send help.

That's where you and I come in. We get to join hands with these doctors and these workers on the ground who are amazing. And then, we've earned the privilege to tell these mothers and these

children about a God who heard every prayer and sent us.

So last week, we had so much that we have promised to feed 350,000 children. Would you help us? Even for a gift of \$30, do you know that you will feed three children for three whole months? \$50 will feed five. \$100 will feed ten children for three months. If you can give \$1,000, that will feed 100 children. Who knows what God wants to do with these little lives when they're given an opportunity?

So please, last week, call that number on your screen and give the very best gift you can. Let's bring hope in Jesus' name.

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.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

On the mission field

SHEILA: I'm here in what is a small part of a massive grave yard. I've never seen anything like this in my life. But this part I'm standing in, these are all children. The thing that has touched us as a team so deeply is the way that the parents have tried to honor their children in some way by leaving something on the grave, whether it's just little booties, a little toy that meant something to the child. I was just back there. They've just dug four more children's graves because they know they're coming. That's why we're here and that's why we need to do something *now*. We need to be able to go into these villages and feed these children and bring hope to these parents so that these four little holes back here stay empty.

We need your help, and we need it now.

In the studio

SHEILA: Thank you so much for responding. Let's just, this is a privilege to serve other people in Jesus' name. Remember, for any gift at all, ask us, and we will send you Kathie Lee's book. It's called *The Jesus I Know*. And I think we get to know Jesus a little better every time we talk to you, Kathie Lee. Thank you for being with us.

KATHIE: I love you, Sheila. Truly, you are one of my favorite people on this planet. You're my sister!

SHEILA: Yeah! I love you, too. Bless you, my friend. And we'll see you all next time on *LIFE Today*. God bless you.

