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Week 27: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Lisa Bevere #2

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me, and we are back with one of our favorite guests, Lisa Bevere. By the way, if you didn't see the other program with Lisa just go to LifeToday.org. You can see all of our daily programs right there at your convenience at LifeToday.org. So I invite you to do that. But today we are going to talk more about *Fiercely Loved*.

SHEILA: Yeah! Thanks for staying over with us. One of the questions I wanted to ask you and kind of trying to put myself in the place of someone who is listening in, and I get quite a few letters from people who are in really hard places or people who are in prison, and I can imagine some people think, I bet God does fiercely love you, Lisa Bevere because you're trying to serve him. You're out there and you've got this incredible ministry with Messenger International. I'm just not quite so sure he so fiercely loves me. What would you say to that?

LISA: And I love that you're bringing that up. I mean God said to Jesus before he had done anything, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased." He didn't say I will be one day well pleased when he finishes well. I just know that God loves each and every one of us, as Saint Augustine said, as though there was only one of us. He loves each of us as though there was only one of us.

So there is no one that God doesn't love. I love that this mindset comes about scarcity. Oh! He must love Sheila because she has been serving God that long. But yet, it was

Jesus that talked about this woman who is anointing his feet and he was like, "Hey, who loves more? The one who has sinned more or sinned less? Forgiven much or forgiven little?" He was like, "The forgiven much actually loves more."

And so I think God looks at everything possibly differently than we look at things. And I know for me, the longer I have lived, the quicker I am to forgive other people, show them more mercy and have more grace for them because I need more mercy. I've just watched this length of days with God and yeah, no, he's -- when we have a bunch of mess, we know -- we don't have a religious spirit. We're not like oh, I'm so glad I'm a Pharisee, I tithe, I do all of this, I'm not like that person. As soon as we start to look at ourselves that way, we're in trouble as far as I'm earning this.

RANDY: Yeah, I was watching The Chosen recently, it's a great series, and really, I love the way they portray how Jesus goes -- he's not impressed by the religious people. He is annoyed by them, oftentimes. But he goes out of his way to be with the person who thinks that they deserve him the least. Do you know what I mean? I kind of hear you saying.

LISA: Because if he can go for the least, he can lift all. I think that he's like, if I love this one who you think is the least, then I love all. Even with, again, we're living in a day and a time where people are saying, we need to deconstruct, we need to flip tables. And yet, Jesus deconstructed and flipped tables, but they were his tables to flip, and he did it out of love. And there is a difference between deconstructing and destroying. And there is a difference between God's judgment and man's judgment because I see people as very -- they tend to be very punitive.

I remember, again, when I was much younger, but it doesn't mean I haven't had to repeat this in my mind a couple of times. I live with all men and sometimes I just don't get the female thing --

SHEILA: Just one husband though -- just one husband.

LISA: Okay. Yes. And I actually, yeah! Now I'm pretty much an empty nester. My life as a Christian has been surrounded by males. I remember there was just one female that just -- I just kept having this same, we kept following the same pattern and she would say things and I would be like, I thought we were -- I said, you know what? That's it! I'm not friends with her anymore. This is it!

And God said, "Is that how you want me to judge you?"

I went, "What?"

He said, "You're saying she'll never change so therefore you will never be reconciled to her. Is that the measure?"

Because the measure I measure with other people is the measure that's going to come back to me.

As I'm watching these different things and again, do I think the body of Christ needs a spanking, a nap, and a hug? Yes! I do. I think it needs all of that. But I almost feel like right now the church, and again I'm not saying Jesus, the church, big C, almost has an autoimmune disease. It is attacking itself. We are quicker to curse than we are to bless. We are quicker to be harsh than have the hard conversations. We're quicker to cancel than to actually connect. There are all of these things that Jesus put in place and modeled for us. We're not doing it. We're warned that we're biting and devouring one another.

I find that when people feel judged they judge. When they feel condemned, they condemn. When they feel canceled, they cancel. And so if we feel love, I'm going to be quicker to love other people. If I've experienced mercy, I'm going to be quicker to extend mercy. So I think all of this gets tied up and it isn't about oh, I love myself. I'm actualizing myself. There is no good thing in me outside of God. In him, I am enough. Outside of him, I'm a mess. And so we can't fall in love with self. We fall in love with

Jesus, and he transforms us to be more like him. I don't even if how I got on that tangent there.

SHEILA: But it's one of the reasons I think that being part of the church is so important because I think we got used to being a culture that sits behind our computer screens and reads things and responds to things. Whereas we used to sit around the dinner table and talk about things and remain present as opposed to saying I disagree with you, so I'm gone now. I just think this is a day that we, as God's children have got to lead differently.

LISA: Right. I 100 percent agree. Again, having this idea of hard conversations and cutting people off, I had someone that I love ask me -- ask me a question. And they said, "What if I'm sitting with someone and they say like, let's say Jesus was here with us and they say to Jesus, I was born in the wrong body. What would Jesus say to them?"

I said, "Jesus would say, 'I love you. You are not a mistake. There is nothing wrong with you. You are woven in wonder.'"

We're like forgetting that there is a brokenness that Jesus has this ability to speak right into it. So what we're doing is labeling ourselves and God is like hey, you call yourself boy or girl, I call you son and daughter. I call you according to relationship. I go to the root of something. I have the spirit of adoption. You feel rejected? No, no. You see long before you ever even noticed me, I was looking for you, I was pursuing you.

So everything goes back to a heart issue and we're all making it a sin issue. Do I believe there is sin? Absolutely. But I also believe that God will always go to the root of something. Just even thinking of my kids, they're all wired so differently. God deals with each of his children uniquely. I had to deal with each of my boys uniquely. Your first born, you met Addison, he is amazing! He is like a real Christian. I'm like "Don't touch the outlet" when he was a baby.

He was like, "Uh!"

And I'd be like, "That's right! Don't touch it." Austin, I'd say, "Don't touch it."

He'd be like (holding hand on it). And "Just look at me."

Like okay. Well, he did get a little shock one time and that was it. But it had to be his idea. You can't take away his choices.

So the two different kids, same household, same parents, different responses. So I had to set Austin up to win. So if he doesn't like having his choices taken away, I had to allow him to make choices. Addison loved, "Lay out my clothes."

Austin the night before I would be like, "Do you want to wear this?"

"No."

"This?"

"No."

"This?"

Okay. You have to choose your battle on certain things like that, but God loves each of his children uniquely, and we're trying to make everything equal. In a lot of ways, we're the church and social justice. Sometimes we're trying to play the role of a savior instead of pointing to the Savior.

SHEILA: Oh that's a good point right there. Over to you.

RANDY: [Laughing] So I want to kind of go back to this idea of the lens. The way we see everything. Talk about social justice! If everything looks pink, it's because you've got

pink lenses on. When we see everything in the Bible as God's trying to get us, it's probably because we've been handed -- or we've built our judgmental lenses to look at everything through them. You're saying that you should look at the scripture that God through this lens of a fierce love that is --

LISA: Yeah, that will fight for me.

RANDY: Transform me. Yes. Explain to me how, when you put those lenses on, it started changing the way you saw your husband, the way you saw enemies of the church and the world, perhaps, or maybe that fallen leader? How did it just radically transform you?

LISA: And truth is, the people that we judge harshly God loves. We are just the people we call enemies God wants to be friends with. So when I am alienating people that God wants to draw, that is a problem.

RANDY: That is a huge problem.

LISA: That is a huge problem. When I'm laying millstones around their neck, when I'm laying burdens on them and not lifting anything, or any way that's going to carry it, then I've got a problem because now I'm making God into a tyrant when I've experienced mercy.

When you look at the whole story of Jonah. He's like, mad, mad about a plant. "I could just die I'm so mad about this plant. You caused a worm to kill --"

He is like, "You don't care about this entire city who don't know their right hand from their left, that don't know right and wrong. You're upset about a plant that sprung up and died? But you don't care about these people. I think right now we, as the body of Christ, need to even glimpse the love of God.

And Jonah was like, "I'm not going there because you're going to be merciful!"

Exactly! So we want God to execute our judgment. And he's like, "No, no, no."

We watched that with Jesus when they were like, "Should we call down thunder on them?"

Jesus was like, "You don't know what spirit you're of."

When he says, "You don't know what spirit you're of," I have to think it is the enemy that is making us think that God is a harsh, condemning father who is looking for reasons to reject us. He is watching for us to fail. Well, guess what? We all fail. That's why Jesus is our fail safe. He was like you already blew it. That's settled, we already know that you're going to make mistakes, you're going to have missteps, you're going to sin -- you're going to sin so I had to make a provision.

RANDY: Okay. So devil's advocate here.

LISA: This is like his new role!

RANDY: I know. How could a fiercely loving God send someone to hell?

LISA: Well, first of all, I don't like that terminology because this is what God says. He says, "I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing." And then he says, "In case you don't know which is the right one, choose life."

So he always says there are two ways: There is a path of life and there is the path of death. He says, "Come all you who are hungry and heavy laden. Come all you who are thirsty. I will satisfy you at no cost."

So he is always inclusive. But there is a way, and it's not a way you earn, it is a way that

was made. And so God made a way for everyone to be saved but we have to choose his way, not our own. So he doesn't send anyone to hell. We send ourselves.

SHEILA: You have a few really powerful quotes throughout this book called *Fiercely Loved*. You'll want to get your own copy. But I love your quote N.T. Wright is one of my favorite theologians.

LISA: He always makes me sound smart so of course, I quote him.

SHEILA: I need to do that more often. But he wrote: "It is not great faith you need, it is faith in a great God." Something about that was very captivating because I can imagine people watching and thinking, I don't think I have enough faith to get all this. But to me, it is like sitting with a great God and that's what changes us.

LISA: It is not about our smallness, it is about his greatness. And I think going back to what we were talking about last show, we shrink ourselves and think that's somehow going to make him happier. Well, he's like hey! I was reading a quote by Dr. Jordan Peterson today. And well, it's -- okay, it was YouTube and I just saw the heading. And it said, "You were created in the image of God, act like it." And we need to be godly.

I'm not saying we're gods and goddesses. I'm saying we need to act like our Father which is to do good. He causes the goodness, his goodness to rain on the just and the unjust. We're like no! We're yanking the goodness over here for only who we think is just. God is like no, I do it on all. Because it is his desire that none should perish. None! So he's not sending anyone anywhere because he desires that no one perish.

SHEILA: What is your prayer as we read through these, and there is a beautiful progression, I love the way you progress, that someone would take away from this?

LISA: Well, if I can ground them in that God loves them as a daughter, that there is an identity that nobody can ever take from them, whether they're divorced, whether they're

single, whether they have children, don't have children. Because see, everything outside of "daughter" is a role, and a role can be taken away, but identity is secure. So who I am in Christ, it makes me his daughter, his son. But I write to women. So that's why it is pink.

So that would be if I can get their identity right, then they can hear what they need to hear. If they can receive the love of God, they'll get that lens correction that they need to have and their perspective will shift. And I tried to make it where there is a scripture and then a teaching around it, a prayer and a declaration because having a declaration, what does that mean? If I read all this and I don't have a phrase that I can have as a takeaway, then I usually, it's going to get put away. I won't live it because it is not just what we hear, it is what we understand and make real. I would hope that the progression would come through that they would have a revelation of the love of God, and they would in turn love others the way God has loved them because it is not okay just to be like I'm so loved! There are some songs that when they're singing, I'm like, we need to sing it back and forth, not just he loves us but he loves them. So it can't just be self-focused because once I receive the love, how can I not love who God loves, which is people?

RANDY: Quickly, growing up my eyes were changing a lot and there was a time where like if we had a baseball game after dark, I was toast, I couldn't see anything. When my parents took me in they were like, this kid is not doing well in school now, he can't play sports, he's just frustrated all the time. They gave me a new prescription and suddenly, I saw things clearly. I saw things as they were intended to be. And that was you can't function in life if you go around that way. I love -- Sheila, I wish everybody would call and ask for this book.

SHEILA: And the thing I do love about the way you've laid it out is that as Lisa says, it is a scripture then there is a devotion, and then there is a declaration. So when I got a hold of this book, I've been doing the declaration out loud. So it is like here: Love without rival. "I choose love and freedom." So what I want to encourage you to do is we're going to tell you how to get a hold of the book and then I want every day, write on a sticky note

if you can't remember things, and throughout the day make that declaration. Stand on this truth and you'll find the truth is changing you.

But there is a situation that we would like to bring huge change to and that is some mothers in countries where their children, their only resource is filthy water, and they can't live like that but we can change it. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: It is a known fact that a person can survive without food for a long period of time -- if they have access to water. But without water, a person may not live more than a week. The irony for these mothers is they can provide water for their families, but in so doing have suffered the loss of one or more of their children to waterborne disease. Why? Because they did not have access to a clean water source.

OPEN CAPTIONS

>> If I had more money, I could have paid for medicine to save my daughter's life. Even though we are poor, if we had clean water, I feel there would be hope for my other children.

ANNOUNCER: What a tragedy for mothers who must live each day thinking will this be the day that one of my other children becomes sick and dies? Unfortunately, that day comes far too often for mothers in villages like these throughout the world.

With your help, *LIFE Outreach International* and our partners have been able to drill over 7,000 wells. Our question now is can we together press forward and provide more water wells so mothers don't have to live in fear that this might be the day another child of theirs dies simply because they don't have access to clean water.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: Water for LIFE is one of my favorite mission emphases here at *LIFE* because it is so basic. I cannot imagine people in the world today who don't have access to clean water. That's why Water for LIFE is hugely on the hearts of James and Betty, and of Randy and I, all of us here at *LIFE*. We've made this commitment that this year, in fact, Lisa, you've been with us, on one of our trips. How did that trip impact you?

LISA: We took a river, rode a boat up the river and we saw all of these women that came from the other villages, and they watched as we opened up a well and they cried out, like thanking God and they begged us because there were children that as soon as they stopped breastfeeding they would get sick and die because the water they drank was the water they bathed in, everything, used the bathroom in, everything. Water is absolutely crucial, and this was the place in Cambodia where the water table was high but there was no information about clean water. I remember they thought we were angels just for coming and bringing water to them.

RANDY: I love that you got to see that. I wish everyone could see it the way that you did. But Sheila, you know this is simple, we can do it, and it changes the lives of thousands.

SHEILA: And we've made a commitment this year to see 350 new wells drilled in 20 nations, and you can help us do this.

RANDY: Yeah, I'm not going to suggest that you'll become an angel, but I'm going to ask you to be like an angel to those people that desperately need us. I say that with a smile because of the joy, the joy on their faces, the joy that I feel that Sheila feels, my parents have felt for so many years when we go in and we say, "Here, drink this. It will give you life. You won't die!"

You know, we always go at the same time, we tell people about Jesus. We show them,

we tell them about Jesus Christ because we want eternal life, and it starts with that water of life and giving them Water for LIFE. Let me tell you how it breaks down real quick. The average well is \$4800 for one well. That's the average cost for the 20 nations, the 350 wells that we've targeted this year.

If you can give a well, I'd ask you to do it right now. Go online, go to the phone, \$4800. Maybe you can do two. If you have the means, let's do it! But for most of us, a gift of \$144 will provide water for 30 people for a lifetime, an average of 70 years. Maybe a \$48 gift is more your means. That will give water to ten people for life. What I'm saying is that if you and I together with our volunteers in the field, and with our mission partners, we can have a huge impact.

Go to the phone or go online right now, please, and give the best gift you can. I promise you, we will take it to the people who need it the most. We will save their lives but we need you to do it, I ask you to do it right now.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Across the globe, hundreds of thousands of lives are lost each year to waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is too late.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will provide for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you the *God's Daily Promise* devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily scripture, inspirational message, and

room to journal your prayers and insights from God's Word.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Faith, Hope, and Love" coaster set. All four beautiful sandstone coasters come in an elegant natural wood holder and artistically display the words of First Corinthians 13:13.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: I pray you are going online or going to the phones right now. Make the best gift you can. Remember, with any gift towards Water for LIFE, we will gladly send you Lisa's book when you ask for it.

Lisa, I want to ask you, when you started to really internalize this and then externalize it, what happened to your level of joy, maybe, in your life?

LISA: Well, it completely erupted. It went from I wonder if I'm okay. I'm constantly second-guessing myself into thinking that I am so loved that he is loving me into this wholeness. I had this moment, Randy where God asked me -- I used to be extremely fearful. I promise you. So I cried out set me free, set me free, set me free. He said, "I gave the life of my son completely that you would be completely free. What did I leave undone?" When I saw that he did, he gave it all, and that I was picking and choosing, I just said, all right, God, if you love all of me knowing everything about me, then I'm going to receive that love. And it just does away with all the shame.

A lot of people think the opposite of fear is faith, but I have found in my personal life that the opposite of fear is love. And having that love, that love of God in my life receiving it, it eradicated the majority of my fears.

SHEILA: Good news! Good news for all of us. Lisa, thank you so much for being with us. And thank you for being with us. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.