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Week 41: Rescue LIFE

Rescue LIFE Mission Special #1

Sheila Walsh

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad that you've stopped and tuned into this particular program. This particular issue that you and I are going to look at today is so important to me. I didn't realize how little I understood about the whole sex trafficking industry until I took my first trip to Southeast Asia. And I think what I realized there was how little I truly know. It is a \$150 billion industry, one of the fastest-growing criminal industries in the world. And so many young—and when I say "young" I mean *really* young girls are caught up in this.

Some of the things that we're going to look at today, I'll just be honest, they're hard to watch but I ask that you stay with me. Because this is not some movie we're watching or some kind of made-up documentary, this is real life that's happening to real girls right now in so many areas around the world. I hope today to be able to answer some of your questions. Because sometimes we think well, why don't they just get out? Why don't they just leave? Perhaps that is a lifestyle they have chosen. That is far from the truth. So many of these young girls are tricked into something believing that they're going to something that will be good, a new job, a way to send income home to their families who desperately need it. And so often what happens, turns into an absolute nightmare.

I remember my very first trip. After spending a couple of days talking to some of these young girls and learning their stories, I went back to the hotel where we were staying, and I literally laid face down on the carpet. And I found myself just sobbing, thinking about what their life was going to look like that very evening after I left them. And I felt so helpless. Then I felt the Lord say to me, Sheila, get up and dry your face, and tell their

stories.

So that's what I'm committed to, that's what we're committed to doing here at *LIFE*. We call it Rescue LIFE because that's literally what we are doing. You will see in some of the pieces that literally, as these girls get to a place where they're about to cross over into something that will ruin their lives, we have people, boots on the ground who will grab hold of them and pull them free.

But first of all, I want you to look at what it's like for some of these young girls. And then I'll tell you how you and I can become involved and change their story. Watch this.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: *When we began bringing you the stories of girls trapped in human trafficking over a decade ago, you responded in a big way. Through the work of Rescue LIFE, we began to shine God's light in the very darkest places on earth. And when that light appeared, the evil ones scattered like cockroaches back into the crevices and corners that they came from. But they never stopped their terrible crimes. There is too much money involved. Instead, they have continued underground. Their progress has been slowed but our work is more critical than ever. Because the traffickers have been chased out of committing their crimes in the open, there is fresh fear among the girls to speak with us. Many don't want their faces shown because they're scared for their families if someone finds out that they're helping end this industry.*

But we want you to know that these girls, even the ones we can't show, they're real. Their pain is real. Our tears have fallen together on the same floor as they've told us over and over that they want freedom but they don't know how. Well, we know how.

Our partners all over the world are reaching these girls, in many cases, preventing trafficking altogether through education and border intervention. We're rescuing them through investigations and SWAT raids. And we're restoring them through safe houses

and skills training so they can have a life and an income when they leave our care.

It is ironic that our success has made our work more difficult, but we won't be stopped—not until the last girl is freed. We need your help today more than ever. We need you to speak up for these precious ones who cannot speak for themselves. They're waiting and hoping for rescue. We can't let them hope in vain.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: We can't let them hope in vain. The image that you saw, one of those images there, this little girl in the corner of a room all by herself in an abandoned building, I spent a lot of time with that little girl. She was 12 years old. 12! I mean at 12, think of what your children were doing—not abandoned and forsaken and forgotten.

So we have a very organized plan to change their future because let me tell you, the traffickers are not sitting back waiting, taking a couple of days off. They're organized and they know what they're doing, and that's why we want to be equally organized. What we do here at Rescue LIFE is a three-pronged approach. It's called: Reach, rescue, and restore.

In reach, what we do is I've gone with our teams up into the mountains where they will go to villages where young children as of the moment when we were meeting them have never even heard of such a thing. They just think of things that little girls should think about. But what we're able to do is sit down with them and teach them about this world that we don't want them to be part of.

I remember the first time thinking I can't believe we're teaching girls this young about this stuff. But it might be one of the most important days in their life to learn if someone approaches you and says, hey, we have a job for you or we've got something, we have a meal prepared for you, run for your life and scream as loudly as you can.

We have teams on the ground who know what to look for because one of the other ways that we reach, and I think this is one of the most important ways is border intervention. And they will be waiting on the border and sometimes they'll see a young girl with an older man or often an older woman and they've been trained to know what to look for. So they will alert the authorities who will then talk to the potential traffickers. And if we discover that that's who they are, then that trafficker will be arrested and will face sentencing. And that young girl will be reunited with her family. So we have reach.

Then we have rescue. When the girls have slipped through the cracks and they find themselves in these dreadful brothels, our teams go in at midnight and kick down doors and bring these girls out and have their traffickers arrested. I got an update this morning from one of the teams that we work with in Southeast Asia, and they said that in the last few years they have been able to have 500 traffickers arrested.

But the other thing is: restore. We take these girls to a place, we have places all across the areas where we work where they can learn a trade, where they can be cared for, where they can be told that Jesus loves them.

This is why I want you to help us because it makes a difference. I want to introduce you to a girl that I spent the day with. An incredible girl with a heartbreaking story. But what I told her was, "I will come home, and I promise you I will tell your story." Watch this.

On the mission field

Open Captions: *We were left hopeless and in debt. When the people we owed money to started demanding payment, my mom asked me to go find work. My friend told me I could go work as a waitress. She took me to the owners of a bar. They gave me something to eat. After eating, I fell unconscious.*

When I awoke, I was being raped. My friend was gone. I felt so betrayed. I was so scared.

I didn't understand what had happened. Then they began forcing me to sleep with three to four men every night. If I resisted, they beat me with electrical wire. And if I still refused, they said they would kill me.

SHEILA: It's clear to me today more than it's ever been that I know nothing—nothing of suffering compared to this beautiful girl and thousands and thousands like her. It's really overwhelming—it's overwhelming because in Southeast Asia she is not alone! There are thousands of girls like this! And the only hope is not the government stepping in, the only hope is the body of Christ.

In Luke chapter 19, verse ten, Jesus said, "The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." That's why Jesus came and that's why you and I are on this earth. We can't wait for somebody else to move in and help. It's our job. It's our responsibility. The sex traffickers are not sitting back thinking we'll take a day off. They're there. They're relentless and if we, as the body of Christ, don't care more than they care then God have mercy on us!

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: I'll never forget Chim; just this beautiful girl with such a look of hopelessness in her eyes. But I want to let you know the other side. I want to bring you some good news because so many of you have helped us through the years and it's made a difference. I got an update this morning from some of our partners to say that 24 of these girls that have been rescued out of trafficking were just baptized. See that's what we get to do. It's not that we grab them from the gates of hell, we pull them into the kingdom of God. I've had the privilege of praying with so many of those young girls who gave their lives to Jesus. That's what it's all about. This is all about Jesus. No matter what we're doing, it is all about Jesus. It is about his heart for people.

In fact, in one of the Psalms, this is Psalm 18, verse 16, here's what it says: *He reached*

down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemies, from those who hated me and were too strong for me. They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress, but the Lord supported me. He led me to a place of safety.

And that's what we're doing. So please, I'm asking you to help us. We have from some of our partners a \$320,000 matching gift. Now what that means is normally it would take about \$128 to begin that process in the life of a girl to reach, to rescue, to restore. But now if you're able to give \$64 that will be matched, and together you will have begun that process in the life of one girl. But if you're able to do \$128 that will be matched and now two children will hear there is a God in heaven who heard your prayer and he sent us.

Some of you can do more. If God has blessed you in a way and you think, you know what? I care about this stuff. I want to do something. \$1280 matched will now reach, rescue, and restore 20 children.

Now we have all sorts of gifts that we want to give you. And I know you don't give for that, I know you give because of your love for Christ. But the thing I think is—every time that I'm there, every time I sit on the floor with these girls, every time I pray for them or pray with them or worship with them, it reminds me that we get so distracted in life and think, well, this is the most important thing; and I need to watch out for that new Netflix series. And I wonder what kind of diet I need to go on.

You know what? That's all fine. However, you and I have a calling that's different than anybody else in the world and that's to be the eyes, the ears, the hands, and the feet of Jesus on this earth at this time. These girls are struggling and suffering right now. Please call! Please call that number on your screen. Please give the very best gift you can. Let's come against the powers of darkness with the beautiful light of Christ. Let's do it in his name. Please call!

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, and restore young lives and give them a future. With 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 "I Hear His Whisper." Each entry in this beautiful 365-day devotional will encourage you with words of comfort, joy, and love as you encounter God's heart and hear his gentle voice.

With a gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive "What Does Your Jesus Look Like?" This captivating book by sculptor, Scott Stearman shares compelling stories and beautiful images revealing how we can be the image of Christ to a watching world.

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

End of video**On the mission field**

Open Captions: *An estimated 4.8 million women, girls and boys are currently victims of sex trafficking.*

SHEILA: Who is your best friend?

Interpreter: She said no. Nobody.

SHEILA: Do you have anyone that you trust?

Interpreter: No.

SHEILA: Many of the girls I've met on these trips are young, defenseless teenagers and they all have similar stories. They wake up next to a much older, strange man and they're held captive for weeks, months, or even years.

Do you remember that first night? Do you remember what that felt like?

Open Captions: It was painful. I cried and ran away. But they hit me and brought me back. I have to sleep with the clients and drink with them. They can do whatever they want.

SHEILA: You and I, as God's sons and daughters, we've got to be the ones telling these girls, "You have a purpose, you have a future, and you have a hope. There is a God who loves you and he is your friend. You are not worthless. You are not worth just \$10 anytime a man comes through the door. You are priceless."

If we don't rescue these girls right now their abuse and misery will continue night after night. It is our responsibility to protect these precious girls, show them the love of God, and help them heal.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: One of the hardest facts of this whole situation is that so many of these girls become suicidal because they think, you know what? I'd rather die than live like this for the rest of my life. That's why what we are doing is so important, to be an answer to their cries.

And I wanted to tell you a couple of stories that last year we were able to intervene in the lives of two young girls. Abini is five years old, and she was living in a brothel with her mom who was a sex worker. But she was being molested by the pimp. The other little girl, her name is Belli, and she is seven years old and was about to be sold off to an old man and then sent off to a brothel. They are now, both of them, have been rescued and they're now in one of our safe houses where they will stay until they age out and begin to live a new life knowing that they have value, that they're loved by Jesus.

There are great stories but there are so many who are still waiting. That's one of the things that we care most about. We don't just go there and film and then leave. The only purpose of going there and filming is so we can bring it back and let you know this is what's going on right now.

This is absolute evil. So many of our missions, I love everything that we do at *LIFE*, whether it is providing clean water or food or putting shoes on little feet or fixing a cleft palate or cleft lip. But I have to tell you, this is the one where I feel we're up against the powers of hell. But I want to remind you that Christ in you, Christ in me, the hope of glory is able to come against that evil in Jesus' name.

But I often feel we have to earn the right to tell these girls about Jesus. And I can't tell you what it is like when you go in at midnight and kick doors down and have those traffickers arrested. Honestly, once they're arrested, once they're in prison, the Lord can reach them too. God's grace can go anywhere. But our concern is for those precious little girls.

Can you imagine at five about to be sold off? I just can't even—when I think of my son at

five or seven, it is inconceivable to me. And once I know about it, I'm responsible for it.

So I'm asking you, please help us. I'm so grateful for our partners who have said listen, we will put up \$320,000 as a matching gift. So if you are able to give \$128 that will be matched, and two children will have their lives changed eternally. Perhaps that's too much for you, perhaps you can just do \$64. That's phenomenal! That will be matched. And then one girl will be able to be placed in that reach, rescue, and restore place where they're given a new life. For those of you who have been given much, perhaps you'd like to give much, \$1280 matched, 20 children will begin that process of being reached, of being rescued, of being restored.

I was given the privilege the last time I was there, they asked if I would lead the Sunday morning worship with these children who have now been rescued. And I'll never forget, at the end of my message I sang "Amazing Grace" and suddenly, every word took on new meaning. As I watched these young girls who have gone through things I can't imagine, raise their arms in worship and sing "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me."

Please, would you help us? Call that number on your screen, go online, and just give the best gift you can. And when we all do that, we are pushing back the darkness in Jesus' name.

Begin video clip

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End of video

On the mission field

KIRIE: Just in the last hour, we've watched this team rescue several girls who are being trafficked across the border. They were able to notice something not right, stop the vehicles, question the girls, and realize that they were actually being trafficked. Because of their efforts, we are stopping lives from being ruined right here on the border. They are just moments away from being taken into a life of bondage.

We've heard these stories over and over and over. Once they cross that line, many of them never return. But we can stop that right here. If we can keep these workers, and these monitors on this border, we can prevent children from being taken into a life that they were never intended to live. This is the stopping place, and we want to say let's stop this. Stop it now!

Please do what you can. Go to the phone, go online, and make the best gift you can.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: I just want to say thank you. As I said at the beginning of this program, I knew this was hard. Those are not easy things to watch. They're not easy things to become aware of. But you stayed with me and I'm so, so grateful.

And for those of you who've been considering calling but haven't done it yet, now would be the time. We're not asking you to give what you don't have. Jesus never said that. Do you remember even when he was feeding the 5,000, he didn't ask the disciples to come up with enough food. All he said to them was, "What do you have?" And when you bring what you have, and I bring what I have, then Jesus does what only he can do. He blesses it, and he breaks it, and he feeds, and he rescues his people. So thank you so much for caring for those who think nobody cares about them.

I just want to remind you that if you're able to give \$64, that will be matched today, and one child will begin that life-changing process. If you can give \$128, that will be matched, and two children will be able to step out of the darkness and into the light.

I just want to remind you that this is the very last day for Rescue Life.

We have lots of lovely gifts that we want to send you just as our way of saying thank you so much. And remember, as you reach out and care for others, just remember all of us here at *Life Today*, we care about you. Thank you so much for being with me and we'll see you next time on *Life Today*.