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Week 19

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Shannon Bream

“Overcomers”

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by friends of Life Outreach International.

ANNOUNCER: Have you ever felt like God isn't living up to his end of the deal? Cable news anchor Shannon Bream relates all too well.

SHANNON BREAM: But I thought, if I follow the rules and I'm a perfect Christian, and nothing bad is ever gonna come into my life.

I have shared openly about a really difficult physical struggle that I had years ago where I lived in excruciating chronic pain for nearly two years, and I just had to say, “Lord, please walk me through this.

If you're not gonna heal me, please give me a way through.”

ANNOUNCER: Next.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to “Life Today.” I'm Randy Robison. Blynda Lane is with me. We're glad you're here. We have an exciting guest.

BLYNDA LANE: It's one of my favorites. I'm so excited. It's Shannon Bream from Fox News Sundays. You might have watched her podcast “Living the Bream.”

She has written a book called “Nothing Is Impossible with God.” She also has written “Women of the Bible Speak.” She's just a great author. She's obviously a great news commentator.

But we have her on the show today, and we get to talk about how she's had some really incredible experiences with the Lord where she has seen the impossible become possible.

RANDY: Yes, she has, and we're excited. She's been on before, and we're glad to have her back. So, Shannon Bream, welcome to "Life Today."

SHANNON: Thank you so much. Great to be with you guys.

RANDY: So, let's talk about the book, "Nothing Is Impossible with God." I'm excited, you know, as someone who's on Fox News, it's exciting to us to hear you saying the things you're saying. You're such a great witness. How is this for you to be able to share this with people?

SHANNON: Well, thank you so much. You know, when Fox came to me a few years ago about writing the book "Women of the Bible Speak," they said, "We know your faith is important to you, we're thinking about putting together a book label and maybe doing something with women and religion," so I'm just so grateful to them, it was their idea.

And it's given me so many opportunities just to share my faith, to share the good news of Christ, and I'm really grateful for that.

BLYNDA: Okay, so the book talks about that there are 11 heroes, 1 God, endless lessons in overcoming. So you go through this Old and New Testament, picking people who are everyday people, but they are heroes of the faith to us.

But what I love about it is you really focus on the fact that each of them had an obstacle to overcome. Why was that the direction you wanted to go for the book?

SHANNON: You know, each time you put together a book or a special speech or something else, there are always things that you can't include everything. Something gets left out.

And I just had this collection of these stories of overcomers really built off Gideon, because it's always been one of my favorite, most encouraging stories. And like you said, these are all different things that people faced. Sometimes they were external, I mean, really going into battle, physical war. Sometimes it was self-doubt or their own mistakes or rebellion. I mean, we can all relate on some level, and we all know what it's like to have something to overcome.

So I love that common thread with all of these stories, and just like us, they are flawed, they're human. The Bible doesn't try to make them perfect superheroes, but it lets us see that their flaws were real and that they had doubts. Sometimes they argued with the Lord, which, you know, I laugh at, like, how dare you, you know, try to reason with the Creator of the universe? But then I remember, oh yeah, I do that too.

So, I think that the stories are good mirrors for our own lives, and places to see where we could find God's strength and have a strengthening of our faith to walk with him through tough things.

RANDY: No doubt, no doubt. Now, you do talk about many people in the Bible, but you also share some of your own personal struggles, and that can be hard, sometimes, to open up, but what have you been through where you've had to say, "God, is this possible?" and then find out, yeah, he can do anything?

SHANNON: Yeah, I write about in the book that I have shared openly about a really difficult physical struggle that I had years ago where I lived in excruciating chronic pain for nearly two years before I finally got a diagnosis and a doctor who, I say to this doctor, "You're an answer to prayer."

And it was a really difficult time because it got very dark. If you've lived with an ongoing condition, emotional, physical, whatever it is, or someone that you love, you've seen people really struggle, and it's difficult. So verses that I knew, prayers that I'd prayed over the years, they just came alive in a different way when I was in that valley.

I would not choose the valley, but there was so much that came from it, almost a bittersweet time, because you're growing closer to the Lord. He was really the only thing I had left to lean on. And I thought so much about Paul's story in Corinthians where he's, you know, got this thorn in his side and he wants it to go away.

We will pray for things and the Lord answers us, but not always the way that we would hope. You know, when Paul, you know, the Lord says, "My strength is made perfect in your weakness," and Paul goes on to say, "Okay, then I will have those weaknesses rest on me so that God's power, Christ's power, can rest on me. I'll brag about those weaknesses."

And I just had to say, "Lord, please walk me through this. If you're not going to heal me, please give me a way through." And that was his message for me, not audibly, but I definitely heard in my spirit, as I was crying and praying through this, at one point him say, "I will be with you." And that's a phrase we see over and over again in his Word, and it's been true.

BLYNDA: It's so true. And when you talk about the different characters in the Bible, I can think of every story, there's Elijah and Jonah and Peter, they all have that moment where they have felt that God is with them.

But I wanna just, really quick, ask you about Peter, because I'm always fascinated by the Peter story because he's someone who was like, "I would never deny you. I will always be your," you know, "your right-hand guy." And then like, as we know, very quickly he did deny him.

But what it does is it gives me as a believer hope that one, I can never do anything that takes me too far from God's forgiveness, but also, like, I don't have to live under shame. I can be restored, I can be redeemed, and I don't have to be defined by my mistakes. So why did the Peter character, why was that so important to you?

SHANNON: Yeah, exactly that, because we've all had moments where we weren't as vocal as we should have been about our faith. We didn't speak up, we didn't stand firm. We're human, and God knows our failures.

And I love that Jesus went right to where Peter had failed and, you know, didn't condemn him and say, "Hey, you let the world talk you into just turning your back on me in my hour of deepest need, multiple times after, yes, I told you you were gonna do it and you said 'Never.'" He always used those very strong words, "always," "never." Peter was very fiery and passionate.

But the Lord didn't say, "You're sidelined for good now. You failed, you made a horrible mistake, and you betrayed me." He said, "Come, I will redeem you, you're going to be the rock on which I build the early church." Peter obviously took up the charge and was bold in his faith and in his defense of Christ and the gospel, and was a martyr himself.

So I, like you, I find that so reassuring that no matter how much I've been unfaithful, he is always faithful. And if I will come back to him in confession and in humility, he's gonna restore me.

RANDY: So you work in an environment that is often very divisive. The news, you know, politics, that kind of thing. But redemption cuts across all of that. Are you getting some good response to that message?

SHANNON: Yes, and I think that, gosh, people are weary, like you said, divided, the world feels chaotic, and people have lost family friendships and friendships and relationships over being so divided over these really heated issues.

But the fact is, if we can look at each other as created in God's image, every life valuable to him, loved equally by him, even people you deeply disagree with, and you don't compromise your principles, but you can love and respect people.

And I find that so much in Jonah's story, because you know, the Lord tells him to go to Nineveh, and I, as a little kid watching this on the flannelgraph with, you know, the whale and with Jonah and the little boats growing up, I thought it was just about being fearful of Nineveh, which he had every good reason to be because the Assyrians were brutal, brutal people. But it wasn't just that.

If you really dig into Jonah's story, it's almost as if he feels they don't deserve the grace that he's been given. And I feel like it should make us ask the question, is there somebody I

think is undeserving of forgiveness, of God's grace? Am I rebelling against God's command that we go to everyone? And who am I to judge?

If God says "I want relationship with everyone, I want to redeem everyone possible who will come to me," we should be faithful to do that even if in our judgment, somebody we think is unworthy.

RANDY: So true.

BLYNDA: And it's hard to do, because we do live in what feels like a divided time. But truly, as believers, we have to be the bridge, right? I know that as believers it's easy to get this thought in our mind that once we decide to give our lives over to Christ, everything's gonna be roses from there. We're gonna be really able to just walk this life easy.

And I think the fact that you've had to write a book that talks about that nothing's impossible with God tells us that there's gonna be things that we have to overcome. What would you say to the person listening who is just a little bit thrown on their back and a little disoriented by what life has thrown at them, it's not what they thought their life would look like?

SHANNON: Yeah, I totally get that because as a kid growing up, and I had the blessing of being in church and Sunday school, and a good school and places where I was getting fed Scripture and truth all the time, but I thought if I follow the rules and I'm a perfect Christian and a good girl, that nothing bad is ever going to come into my life.

But that's not scriptural. We see struggles from some of God's, you know, holiest, most set-apart people who struggled with loneliness, or illness, or any number of things. And what does Christ say in John 16:33? He says to the disciples, "You're gonna have trouble in this world," but he follows that up with, "But take heart. I've overcome the world."

So, listen, if you're struggling, I get it, I've been in very, very dark places. I've been discouraged, I've been depressed and in pain. And all I can tell you is that God is working. If you look at these men and—heroes from the Bible, God was always working in their story. It's really hard to see sometimes when we're in pain, but he's never abandoned you, he will walk through it with you, and there is good purpose in it, even if it takes maybe decades, maybe till we get to heaven, to understand what was going on.

BLYNDA: It's that Romans 8:28 that's a little bit hard to put our head around, you know, wrap our head around, that God is always working things together for good.

RANDY: Yeah, and I've always said it's easy to work good things together for good. The real miracle is when it's all like the bad stuff and the garbage. And when you get something good out of that, you go, "Okay, that didn't even make sense," and that's where you go, okay, it's not impossible for him.

You mentioned loneliness though, and it surprises me, you know this, in a world that is more connected, you know, the information age, we all have “friends” on social media and things like that, and yet loneliness is epidemic. And it’s just wearing people down. And in your book, you talk about Elijah, and where God comes into our weariness and our loneliness. What is it that jumped out at you in his story?

SHANNON: You know, he does become so discouraged. And you know, he was a brave prophet, a man of God who, regularly God said to him, “You go take this message to King Ahab,” which, he was a super evil guy, and he had Queen Jezebel along with him. And many, many times Elijah went, he stood firm, he gave the message, he didn’t back down.

But there was a time when his life was in danger, which it often was, when he was on the run, he was exhausted and he was hungry, he was demoralized. And yet we see God show up, he sends him the food, he makes sure he’s by a brook where he has water, and he comes to encourage him.

And, you know, Elijah’s saying, “I’m the only one left. I’m the only one fighting for good and for truth and for you.” And God says to him, “It’s not true. There’s a remnant there. I know you feel alone, but there are thousands more who have not bent the knee, who have not caved.”

And I think a lot of times people feel very lonely. It could be part of your faith walk and feeling like, ugh, I’m trying to stand up against a culture or a place that doesn’t understand, it doesn’t respect the Lord and his holiness. That’s how Elijah felt, but God said to him, “You’re not alone.”

So the Lord is always gonna be with you, but there are brothers and sisters around the globe who are with you as well. And you know, if you just feel lonely in the path of life, I get that, too, and we’re all human and we’re frail. And Christ came, fully God, fully man, so we know that he understands every temptation, every bit of suffering, that we will ever walk through. We know that he gets what it’s like to suffer in every possible way. So you’re not with a high priest that doesn’t understand your struggles.

BLYNDA: Not only does he not just understand it, in that story, he gives Elijah a nap and a snack and—

SHANNON: Right, sometimes it’s what we need.

BLYNDA: But I’m always fascinated by that story, even backing it up a little bit, because I mean, the story about Elijah is that he had just witnessed God doing the miraculous, and I think it’s actually a really good lesson for me to remember about like the fallibility for humans, because here’s Elijah watching God do this absolute miracle, and his next response is to be afraid of Jezebel and to run, you know?

SHANNON: Our memories can be very short.

BLYNDA: Yes, after we've seen—but it helps me as a believer go, okay, you know what? That's why I love when you characterize, you give these stories life by saying, you know, this is—you can see yourself in this story.

You can say, you know what? There's been times in my life I've seen God do something amazing, and then I wake up the next morning and I actually question, you know, if he's for me or if, you know, whatever it is. And it's like, how can we do that? But we're so reminded by the Word that he is with us, we are never alone.

SHANNON: And we see that over and over again with the Israelites especially. You know, that God had performed miracle after miracle, I mean, just the Exodus itself, then the parting of the Red Sea and the manna and all of the ways that he provided, and yet they would grumble and say, "We should have just stayed in Egypt, we should have stayed in slavery, and we should have never gone out here."

And I gotta think that the Lord was—and we saw him get frustrated with them and say like, "How many miracles do I have to do? How much do I have to lay at your feet and guide you?" So yeah, it's a good reminder that when we have questions and doubts, too, we're not alone. People struggle in their faith journeys.

RANDY: Yeah, I love the story of the Israelites. You wander about the desert, and it's like that's where you learn—that hard place is where you learn to trust. It's where you learn obedience, and it's preparation to live in that Promised Land, and I do see a parallel.

I'm curious about this, Shannon, and again, I so appreciate your witness. I know when the commercials broke in for the book when I was watching TV, I'm like, "Oh, yay, Shannon, go!" Have you had anybody come back to you and say, "What is this thing you're talking about? I need some impossible things to happen in my life, and I'm weary, I'm hopeless, I'm lonely, all these things that you talk about." Have you had anybody come back to you and just get to see that impact?

SHANNON: Yeah, over the years, sometimes I'll have people show up at my office and say, "I'm not a religious person. I know that you are. I know that you could pray. Could you pray for me? My family's having this crisis," or something really difficult is going on. And they may have more questions than they do answers, but I feel like, "Lord, thank you. Help me to be humble with this season, and just to steward this well."

But if somebody wants to show up at my office and say, "I don't get this, but will you pray for me?" what a blessing. And so, you know, just to be that open conversation for people if they do have questions, if they're struggling in life, I mean, to really show up for them, be the hands and feet.

My mom is the best example in the world of that. When somebody is in trouble or has a baby or, you know, whatever is happening, my mom is showing up with the food, she's showing up to pray, and I just saw such a great model from her with that. And so, I just wanna be there when people have questions, or they're in trouble. Hopefully they'll come to someone like you guys, too, a person of faith that they think, "I don't know exactly what this is, but I know there could be hope here."

BLYNDA: In the book you don't just talk about these heroes, but you give some practical advice to people who are wanting to know how to walk out some of these tough situations or how to believe for the impossible. Can you give us some of the practical advice that the book offers to help others?

SHANNON: Yeah, I think every one of the stories, each one of these characters has got something, but I love that Moses, when they've left, they've gotten out, there've been all these plagues, the horrible things that happened in Egypt, Pharaoh finally lets them go. They're out there, they get to the Red Sea, and they turn around and Pharaoh's changed his mind.

And now the army is there and the people are panicking and freaking out, and we've seen this full trajectory of Moses being afraid, not wanting to take on the assignment in the early, you know, approach of God in that burning bush. Now he's matured enough in his faith that when they're standing there, he gives kind of this mini sermon which I think has these great points in it, in Exodus 14.

He says, "Don't be afraid." He says, "Stand firm." He says, "Stand and watch for God's deliverance, his salvation for you. Be still," which is my hardest one. And then he says, "All will come together," and, you know, "He will fight for you. God will fight for you." So it's kind of that mini sermon in just a couple of verses, and I think, you know, we take each one of those things and walk through it in the book and how you can apply it to whatever your situation is. It's just good, truthful, Biblical knowledge.

RANDY: In one of those situations God says, "I will fight for you while you stay silent," and that's the hard part for me. God's like, "Just shut up, I got this." And then it says God told Moses to tell the Israelites, "Keep moving forward."

And I, man, I can't tell you how much that means to me because a lot of times I feel bogged down and I'm like, you know, what do I do? And God's like, "Just keep on what I've put right in front of you." And I see you doing that, Shannon, you know. You keep moving forward, you keep just being the witness, the open door, and I so much appreciate that.

SHANNON: Well, thank you. You know, I once had a friend tell me years ago when my dad died unexpectedly, she's a believer, too, and she said that to me, like, "Just do the next thing. God will lead you to the next step."

When you're afraid, when he's calling you to something, when you're unsure, you know, I see that in Gideon's story. There's so many times when Gideon was so afraid and asked God for reassurance, and I think that's different than testing God or saying, demanding a sign or a miracle.

I think when he sees the development of our heart, he knows our hearts better than we do, but he knows when we need that reassurance, whether it's Gideon or Elijah or any of these heroes in the Bible.

RANDY: Yeah, I love it. Thank you so much for sharing with us.

BLYNDA: Thank you, Shannon.

SHANNON: God bless you guys.

RANDY: I have got a next step for our viewers that I hope you will consider. I want you to take a look at our mission partners around the world over in Africa where we feed 350,000 children every single day, but we only do it with your support. Please watch this and consider how you can be a blessing to someone today.

[music]

ISAK PRETORIUS: There are no crops being planted here, there's no food. When there's no rain, and there's no crops, and there's no food, there's also no life. And unfortunately, that is a reality this village knows all too well.

Mothers burying children who've died of starvation, of malnutrition, children suffering and going to bed hungry night after night, simply because they don't have the ability to provide the food that their children need.

ISAK: You're looking at a child that is suffering, suffering because of malnutrition and the related diseases that come with it, like TB and others, that literally steal these children's lives. And I've gotta tell you that I'm tired of this situation. I'm tired of watching children die in clinics like this. Child after child, mother after mother whose heart is broken because of something so simple, the fact that children don't have enough food.

It's an injustice, and it's actually the indictment, I believe, of our generation, the fact that in the world we live in today, with the abundance that we have, that we're not able to ensure that children like this don't suffer and die from malnutrition, the painful death of starvation. Please, you've got to change that. You and I have to actually take our responsibility.

We've gotta do what we can do, because we're able. You're able and I'm able. And together, we need to act. We can't be silent anymore. We've gotta take that action, and

we've gotta save their lives, because we can. Because if we remain silent, the silent killer, malnutrition, will win the battle again and again and again.

RANDY: You know, Blynda, when I watch that, I'm reminded of being out there. And a lot of people don't realize this, but those parents, the mothers, even the children a lot of times, they work in those fields every day. They plant, you saw them with some rudimentary tools there, you know? They work sun up to sun down to provide food for themselves.

BLYNDA: I can't even imagine how it feels though if they have a drought season, where they've done all this work and then nothing grows.

RANDY: Yeah, and through no fault of their own. And you know, a lot of them are in countries that that simply don't have systems that would provide any kind of backup. Frankly, a lot of them, there may be some conflict, but at the end of the day, you have people through whom no fault of their own, and despite their hard work, are facing starvation and death. And that's where we're able to step in.

And I look at that, I look at what Isak says, this is an injustice that we can bring God's justice into.

BLYNDA: Yes, and he was so passionate to say. This is kind of an indictment on us that we still, in this day and age, we're living at a time where children are still dying from hunger. It shouldn't be that way.

RANDY: Yeah, and I love that that is the calling of the church. We were created as Christians for good works. And a good work is not just bringing food, because we do that in these emergency situations, with your support. But I think it's also a God work, because wow, what an opportunity to preach the gospel, to go into a place of darkness and share light.

So with Mission Feeding, yes, we go in, we bring them the necessary food to get them through the next day and the next week, but we often do that in schools, where we teach them basic skills, but also we teach them about the love of God, to get them through the next generation, to give them a hope and a future, not just a meal.

Mission Feeding is so much more than the emergency food, though that's where it starts. Mission Feeding really is sharing life, in every way, with people who desperately need it, people who are dying.

That's why we ask you to go to the phone or go online, make the best gift you can, knowing that it's very, very simple. Thirty dollars will, for example, help feed three children for several months. And you go, how can you do that? For one, it's the power of the dollar, but also it's the power of the people like Isak and many that you see in these videos, who are on the ground. The systems are in place.

We're in a unique position at Life Outreach, because we've been doing this for so long. We have the relationships and the systems, the distribution, so that \$100 will help feed 10 children for several months. Many of you could give a gift of \$1,000 and it would feed 100 children for several months. But do what you can, and please, I ask you with the same passion that you see from Isak, do it now. The situation in many places is so desperate that they literally cannot wait another day. We're there. We need you to step up, to join us in Mission Feeding.

ANNOUNCER: Right now across the continent of Africa, children are suffering, facing severe malnutrition and even death. With food reserves critically depleted and many areas experiencing devastating famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us every single day.

Through Life's mission feeding outreach, your gift of love can be an answer to a prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for 3, 5, or 10 children for 3 full months.

With your gift we'll send you "The Father's Heart" devotional. Drawing from Scripture and his past, James Robison takes you on a 90-day journey to help you experience a deeper, more personal relationship with God as your loving Father.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you will receive The Father's Heart bundle. This stationary set, paired with the devotional, is a thoughtfully-designed collection created to help you share encouragement, prayer, and the love of our Heavenly Father with those you care about.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more, which will help feed 100 children in desperate need, request Life's beautiful bronze sculpture, The Good Shepherd. So, please call, write, or make your gift online today.

RANDY: I do hope you're going online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. You will be helping to save lives and share the love of Jesus.

And today, if you would like us to send this book, "Nothing Is Impossible with God," I'd love to get in people's hands.

BLYNDA: It's awesome. I mean, a book full of hope, that's what it is.

RANDY: Absolutely. So people can request that with any gift, and Shannon brings such a gift to us. Shannon, thank you for being with us on "Life Today."

SHANNON: Yes, God bless you guys. It's my honor to be with you.

RANDY: We appreciate all you guys being with us. Don't miss us again here next time on "Life Today."

[music]

DAVID POLLACK: Got drafted in the NFL and then one play, one hit, and it was gone, just like that.

ANNOUNCER: A career-ending injury was just the tip of the iceberg.

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