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Week 24

Sheila Walsh

“Mission Feeding”

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

ANNOUNCER: On this special episode of "Life Today."

SHEILA WALSH: And so I was sitting down at my desk, and I was viewing the different pieces that I'm gonna share with you today, and suddenly I was just like this--overwhelmed with this sense of how easy it is for me to get caught up in my own life at moments and forget the bigger picture.

I found myself sitting there with tears rolling down my face.

Now, I'll tell you what I did expect, and I'll tell you what absolutely blew me away.

ANNOUNCER: Next on "Life Today."

[music]

SHEILA: Hi, welcome to "Life Today." I'm Sheila Walsh, and I'm so glad that you're gonna spend the next few minutes with me.

I have a slight confession to make up front.

Do you ever have one of those moments when you're kind of caught in something that seems important, and then you think how ridiculous it really is when you put it in perspective of everything else, excuse me, that's going on in the world?

So this morning, I don't know why I did this, but I decided to weigh myself. Never a good thing to do before you've had your coffee.

And you know, I was kind of frustrated with myself because, you know, I have all these great ideas of what I'm gonna do and how I'm gonna eat healthier and all that stuff, and the scale basically said to me, "Come back when you're alone," so it was clear that things were not going well.

And then I came downstairs and I thought about today. I thought about being here in the studio at Life, and the incredible privilege I have of a perspective that perhaps some of you don't have.

You know, I've been able to travel to different parts of the world and see the real needs that are going on, and also see the difference that you and I can make.

And so I was sitting down at my desk, and I was viewing the different pieces that I'm gonna share with you today. And suddenly I was just like this--overwhelmed with this sense of how easy it is for me to get caught up in my own life at moments and forget the bigger picture.

For those of us, for you and I who love Jesus, we are on this planet for a purpose. We're not just here by accident at this time in human history. We are here for a purpose. And what is our purpose?

That's what I began, as I watched the final pieces beginning to roll, I found myself sitting there at my desk with tears rolling down my face, thinking how quickly I could have forgotten some of the things that are going on, not months ago, not years ago, but at this very moment, and also remembering some of the women that I have met on some of my trips.

Now, I'll tell you what I did expect, and I'll tell you what absolutely blew me away.

I knew that the first time that I was flying to Africa and I would be on a Mission Feeding trip, I knew that I would have to see children who were severely malnourished and were hurting, were clinging to life. I knew that I would meet their mums, and as a mum myself, sitting beside them, watching, trying to see through their eyes as their little ones struggle. I knew that.

Now, you're never prepared for how brutal it is, but it was in my mind and in my heart.

But here's what I was not prepared for. I was not prepared for the praying women I met.

These women living in abject poverty, with nothing to feed their children, they weren't worrying about what they might look like in a reflection. What they were doing was looking at their children who were suffering, but then what they were doing was they were getting on their knees under an African sky and lifting their requests up to God.

These are amazing women. I want you to meet one or two of them. Watch this.

[music]

SHEILA: When I'm on a missions trip, my heart is continually touched by mothers facing some of life's most devastating situations.

[speaking foreign language]

SHEILA: This is Armida. Can you begin to imagine the crushing impact of losing your children because you could not feed them? It was devastating for Armida, but she knows she must carry on for her other children. How does she manage it? Through fervent prayer.

SHEILA: I would love to tell you Armida's story of losing her children because of a lack of food is rare, but it is not. These women, by show of hands, shared how many children they each had lost. They well know the same heartache as Armida.

Mandelena lost five children. Yngo, two children. Margarita, one child. Julia, three children. One thing all these precious mothers have in common through prayer is they put their hope for tomorrow in the hands of Jesus.

SHEILA: I will never forget that here, in this village, my sister in Christ gets down on her knees, even though she might not be kneeling on a carpet, she might be kneeling on sand or dirt, but we are thanking the same God for his provision that day, in absolute confidence that the God who is with us today will be with us tomorrow.

God is moving in Africa. And you and I, we get to be a part of it.

[music]

SHEILA: I love what James said. "If you want an answer to prayer, be an answer to someone else's prayer."

You know, that very first trip that I took left an impact on me, but honestly, it has only increased, because the situation in so many of those areas of the world is getting worse and worse.

And it's almost this--the great irony of a place like Africa is you can have one area where it's devastation because of flooding, and then you can have another area where it's devastation because they haven't seen rain in over a year.

And I've watched--these mothers are not women who sit around hoping that someone will come and give them a handout. No, I have watched them digging through the dirt, looking for anything that they could give their child.

You know, the first lady that that we saw there on that first piece, did you notice she had the name "Jesus" written on her headband? And one of the things I was so struck by was she said, you know, "At the end of the day, we thank the Lord for his provision for one more day."

And what they have is almost nothing. But I think sometimes, when you literally have nothing, and then you find a little something, you're so aware of the fact that your dependence is completely on the Lord. And perhaps we forget that, you know?

We have so much that we forget that literally every good gift comes from the Lord. But watching our sisters on their knees praying, you know, I read something, I used to work with an organization called Tearfund in England, and I get their newsletter.

And I read it this morning, and it said this: "Poverty and malnutrition is never God's will, we are." We are the answer to those prayers.

You know, sometimes we think that, you know, "Well, I could never go and be a missionary," and, you know, the Lord doesn't need all of us to do that. We have our partners who are on the ground right now, waiting, because we've made a commitment at Life to feed 350,000 children this year.

And when we talk to our partners, we tell them, you know, "We'll present the need, we'll help our people understand."

So that's what I'm asking, if we'll all do something. Thirty dollars will feed three children for three months. You can't feed three children with \$30 in a restaurant in 1 night here. \$50 will feed 5 children. \$100 will feed 10 children for three whole months.

One of my friends has started a campaign that I love, and it's called Skip It. Skip one thing that you don't need, to be able to give children something they literally cannot live without.

And you know, sometimes we think, "Well, how did these crises happen?" You know, what led up to those children being in that situation? Well, that's a great question. Would you watch this, and I think it'll answer that question for you. Watch this.

ISAK PRETORIUS: People often ask me, "What does crisis look like? When you say there's a crisis in the field, what is that?" This is the picture of crisis.

Mother after mother here in a screening clinic for malnutrition. You can see how overcrowded it is. Mothers that have come here in absolute desperation.

Crisis is when there's more mothers than we can handle. Crisis is when there is not enough food for each and every child. Crisis is when the silent killer of malnutrition comes in and starts to literally rob the lives of each and every one of these children.

But I need you to understand where that crisis starts. It doesn't start here. This is where it ends, and many times it ends with a tragic ending.

But this crisis starts out in the village. It starts because of failed crops due to the worst drought in 40 years in this area. It starts because a mother is not able to produce enough food to feed her family. It starts because a child goes to bed without a meal that day and the next and the next. That is how this crisis starts.

It's not because these mothers are not doing everything they can to provide for their children. It's because everything they can is not enough.

How do we change that? you ask. We change it by reaching the mothers out in the villages. We change it by bringing Mission Feeding to those mothers, providing that bowl of food each and every day, the nutrients that that child needs. That's how we avert this crisis, not here in the clinic. By the time we get here, many times it's too late.

So please, help us today to take Mission Feeding to the mothers out in the villages. I can give you a guarantee that we will literally bring hope to those mothers and life to those children.

SHEILA: Hope and life. That's the Kingdom of God, that Jesus came to give life to each one of us, and because of the hope that we have been given, we get to reach out and make a difference.

And I could almost guarantee that if you and I could get on a flight tomorrow and fly over there, and you saw with your own eyes what was going on, you would do everything within your power to help alleviate the suffering of these children.

But the great thing is, that's why we bring these stories to you, because it's not practical for us all to get on a flight and go. So we bring the children to you.

That precious little one at the end, you know, when you see that skin peeling away, that's one of the effects of malnutrition, where there's simply not enough nutrients or protein in the body.

What we want to do and Isak, I mean, we love working with the Pretorius family. His dad and mum started it, and he's carrying on his father's work, Peter Pretorius. But the thing that we want to do is we want to get to the villages before the children end up in the malnutrition clinics. And we can do it.

And so I'm asking you, I'm asking you to help us. We want to feed 350,000 children, and we've broken it down in such a way that every single one of us, whether you're a teenager with an allowance, whether you're a successful businessman, whether you're a stay-at-home mum, whether you're a retiree, every single one of us can do something.

Thirty dollars will feed three children for three months. Fifty dollars will feed five children for three whole months. This is a crisis, and it's a crisis right now.

And you and I are God's hands and feet on the earth at this moment. Is there any doubt in your heart or mind that if Jesus was literally walking this earth at the moment, that's where he'd be? He would be with those who are hurting, and those who are broken, and those who are crying out for help.

These mums, these grandmothers, these children, they're family. So let's determine that this year, we're gonna make a difference.

So please, will you call the number on your screen, and you might think, "Well, I don't have a lot," but if you give what you have, and I give what I have, and we all do something, then together we're gonna make a massive impact.

The kingdom of darkness in our nation is getting darker and darker by the day, and this is not a time for you and I to sit back and say, "Well, Lord, come and rescue us." No, this is a time to say, "We are here at this moment, on this planet at this time, and we're gonna reach out in Jesus's name and we're gonna save lives."

And you know what the other thing is? We often get the privilege of then praying with some of these mothers who don't even know who Jesus is, and leading them into a relationship with Christ that will last for eternity.

So, please, go to your phone, dial that number on the screen, call that number, go online, just give the very best gift you can, and together, you and I are gonna change this world.

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.

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

ISAK: We've come into this village because we've heard of how bad the situation is here. The only thing that they're eating, there's this wild sort of berry-like fruit that they're getting off of the tree, and then the only other thing is that they're actually taking these worms, drying them, and then they're actually eating these worms. That's all they have to eat.

I was just talking to the people, and this lady responded the moment I stopped, and she started speaking.

[speaking foreign language]

ISAK: That was the cry of her heart. Help me to honor my promise to this mother that says, "Yes, we will return, we will help you, we will save lives."

[music]

ISAK: It's good to see you again, eh?

ANNOUNCER: The mission team was able to fulfill their promise and return to the same village with emergency food supplies because of the support from the friends of Life Outreach International.

ISAK: I know you remember me because we were here just maybe three weeks ago, eh?

[speaking foreign language]

ISAK: And we made--I made you a promise that we were gonna go away and we were gonna see what we could do to be able to come back and help your community, because there was no food here because of the drought.

And so I'm really excited to be able to say the truck is here. The food is here. We are fulfilling on our promise, but not just today. We will continue to assist your community as much as we can going forward. But for today we will do the first distribution, God bless.

ANNOUNCER: There are many more villages just like this one. The record drought has left countless children and their families without enough food and at risk of extreme malnutrition. Join the friends of Life, and be the answer to the cry of those in great need.

[music]

SHEILA: You know, some of you have written and have said sometimes, "Do you ever get a chance to go back to those villages?" You know, "You show us a situation, do you ever get to go back?"

And so we really wanted you to see that very immediate answer to prayer, that darling woman crying out, "If you don't come back, we will die." And three weeks later, Isak was able to go back with the team.

But let me tell you, there are women in hundreds of other villages, and their cry is the same, and the need is now. And we can only do this if you will help us.

We've promised 350,000 children, that's our commitment. We would love to blow that out of the water, honestly, because the need is so great.

And if those of us who claim the name of Christ took that seriously in terms of when Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me water." Whenever we reach out in Jesus's name, it's as if we're literally feeding the Lord, reaching out and touching him, because he is with those who are hungry and suffering.

That's where you always found Jesus. He was always with the broken, with the downtrodden, with the forgotten.

But whenever we go into these villages, we tell them, "You are not forgotten. We will come back and we will tell your stories." And it's the most glorious thing in the world to be able to then go back and let them see, we're not just coming to tell you about a God who loves you.

First of all, we're gonna come and show you how he loves you, that we're gonna help feed you, help take care of your children. So often we set up the feeding programs in the school, so the children have to come to school to get their meal, and then it breaks that cycle of poverty and illiteracy that goes from generation to generation.

We believe, we're believing that in that great continent of Africa, that God is gonna raise up men and women to be leaders in their nations, but it starts with something so simple.

It starts with you, and it starts with me saying, "Yep, I'm not just gonna sit and watch this, I'm actually gonna go and pick up my phone, and I'm gonna dial that number on the screen, and I'm gonna make a commitment."

Even just \$30, that would feed three children for three months. If you were able to give \$100, that would feed ten children. And if God has really blessed you and you think, "You know what, I could give \$1,000," some of you could do that. Do you know that that would feed 100 children for 3 months? I mean, what a blessing.

You know, so often I think we forget that we're on this planet just for a short time, you know, it's like a vapor. And then one day, Jesus is coming back and we are going home.

And wouldn't it be wonderful to see so many children, faces from around the world, who could say, "I am here because you reached out in Jesus's name"?

So, please, would you go to your phone? Would you go online? Would you just give the best gift that you can do? And let's change this world, in Jesus's name.

There are a lot of women on their knees right now in huts all across Africa, saying, "God, can you hear my prayer?" Let's be the answer to that prayer.

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.

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[music]

♪ Oh, you can't hear me cry ♪

♪ See my dreams all die ♪

♪ From where you're standing ♪

♪ On your own, it's so quiet here ♪

♪ And I feel so cold ♪

♪ This house no longer feels like home ♪

♪ Ooh-ooh-ooh ♪

♪ Ooh-ooh-ooh ♪♪

[music]

JOHN YEATTS: So I'm in Angola, and we've been here several days, and we've discovered the tremendous need with mothers who are still losing their children because of the devastating drought.

But today is a fabulous day. It's a day of celebration, because Mission Feeding is in this village. Mission Feeding is in this school.

And as much of a great day it is that we get to serve, I still have in my mind every mother we've talked to this week who's lost a child. And so I'm asking you, do not delay.

Go to the phone right now, go online right now, whatever way you give, go, and make your best gift today, so that we can make sure that other villages have days of celebration just like this village, rather than days of mourning where they're having to bury their children.

SHEILA: John, that's exactly why we are doing this. Thank you so much, that was so powerful. And to see that line of children with their little bowls. Hope in a bowl, life in a bowl. And it's only possible because we all join together.

This is our last day of Mission Feeding.

We have made a commitment to our partners who are literally on the ground right now. So let's deliver some hope today.

If you haven't called yet, please do, give the best gift you can, and from all of us here at Life, God bless you, and thank you so much.

[music]

ANNOUNCER: "Life Today" is made possible by the supporters of Life Outreach International. Your gift will be used exclusively for the exempt purposes of Life.

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