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Week 36

James: Hey, y'all look good! You look great! And I know some of you are glad we can't see you but we welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I are thrilled to present *Wednesdays with Beth*. We actually refer to our Wednesdays with Wednesdays in the word because that's what's going to happen.

I want to show you something very cute. This is a beautiful little Christmas ornament. You say, "What in the world are you doing talking about this this time of the year?" Well, we want to give it to you. It's a little shoe. It's quite beautiful. On the back of it it's stamped "*LIFE's* Christmas Shoe Project." And we give smiles and shoes for Christmas. You're going to want to get one of these. We're giving it to those of you who will simply help us give children some shoes. You're going to want to do that.

Well, Beth is teaching on our true selves and I think sometimes people don't know -- they really don't know what they look like. And I think even... sometimes we have too high an opinion but more often we have a low opinion and then we don't want to get honest about ourselves.

Well, let's listen to Beth because I think she is going to inspire all of us. Here's Beth. Welcome her.

Begin video clip

Beth: Have you ever had a revelation happen to you when you realize that what it is you find distasteful about somebody is what is in them that is in you? I hate it!

[Laughter]

I absolutely hate it. But what you resist is that it forces you to look in the mirror. That what you see in them is a seed of yourself. That's what you can't stand. It's this glance at it. I've got to tell you where this has happened to me because we're just being honest, this is our series; we're just like being transparent before one another. And unfortunately, I'm the only one doing all the talking. It is time for you to write me and tell me all your honesty.

But every now and then, God will cause me to kind of have almost an obsessive stare at a woman who in her attempt to retain youth when youth was no longer possible, she has completely disfigured her face. I'm talking about disfiguring her face. I'm talking about when you look at somebody and think, what has happened that you can look in the mirror and you think that looks okay?

I've got a very, very good, dear friend who is a dermatologist. And she said, "You cannot know how many times we try to say to a patient, 'It's not going to look good.'" I'm going to ask you... she said, "Every now and then... she just goes, 'I can't do it. You can have somebody else do it but I can't do it because when you do that, you honestly are not going to any longer look real.'"

I don't mean trying to work with what you've got. I'm not talking about a little nipping and tucking here. I'm talking about a whole restructuring where somebody looks like they've got on this weird mask and they've got all these implants in their face; they no longer have any nose at all.

And listen, when your cheeks stick out further than your nose in your profile, something ain't right. Is somebody with me on this? See, the Lord, I'll get almost obsessed with it like I can't quit looking at it. Like if it is in an airport or something or in a restaurant or something, sometimes Keith will go, "Do I need to sit to the side where you can see better?"

Because what I know is bothering me is that I think the Holy Spirit is saying to me, "You want to be careful, Beth, don't you?" Because I work out, I like fun clothes, I want to have cool hip hair. Where's the line? I don't know. I don't know where it is. Because if somebody argued it with me, I would say, "Do you color your hair?" We wear makeup. Most of you guys don't.

[Laughter]

Some of you do.

Like where is the line? Because truly the only way you can know it in the culture that we live in is to walk in the spirit enough to where God can say through his Holy Spirit within you, Hmm-mmh.

So the Lord will constantly, when I'm in a situation, I'm looking at someone, just a few years older than me that has gone kind of bizarre on it, I'll hear him say in my inner man, "Is that what you want? You better be careful, Beth. Stay this side of the line."

Lord, will I know where the line is? So I've got to deal with my daughters. My daughters are both in their early 30s; one is 30, and one is 32, and I've got to deal with them.

Say, "This is what I want you to do. If Mommy ever crosses the line and I no longer look like a normal person, if you ever come home and I've got a small nose..." And listen, I'm not -- listen, I'm not talking about -- I'm not dogging having a nose job. Listen, goodness knows, I would have loved to have had one at some point but by the time I had the money to, I didn't care anymore. Does anybody know what that's like?

[Laughter]

So I'm not dogging any of that. But I'm saying bizarre! I need to see your hand if you know what I'm talking about. Where it is just like bizarre! Like whoa!

Let me tell you something, by the time -- there's this whole big thing that came out a couple years ago: 60 is sexy. I want to tell you something, no, it's not.

[Laughter]

No, it's not. Pick your shirt up because it's really not. You know? It's a lot of things... It's a lot of good things but no, sexy is not one of them. I can't really even tell you 50 is sexy. I just can't. Because it's not what it is about then. But we're trying to be that. It's a little gross.

[Laughter]

So I ask my -- am I telling y'all the truth or am I making something up? Is this just me being sensitive or have you seen it? So I've made a deal with my daughters, Amanda and Melissa. I said, "Here's what I want you to do. If you ever look at me and go, 'Whoa! Where's our mother?'

I want you to say, 'Mother, we love you so much but you look like an idiot.' That's all I'm asking. That's all I'm asking." I need somebody -- I need somebody because see, what we don't like is like we have to face something that is like a Goliath-size of something that is just pent up inside of us, and it's scary.

I want to read the first three verses of Genesis 33 and I'm relieved and you're relieved because listen, that was a painful few minutes we just spent; wasn't it? Was it painful

to anybody besides me? I'd love to hear what you men are relating on because there's got to be a way that that relates to you guys as well.

Genesis 33, one through three. So here he goes walking off. We've got the sun coming up, the music is really playing loud -- it's so powerful. The sun is rising; you can see that sun coming up, just like purple through the clouds and through that gorgeous, gorgeous ray of sun coming up. And we see Jacob and he's limping. And a lot of scholars who will say there's no reason for us to ever think that he ever got over it. I mean, who was going to like pull out his leg? You know what I'm saying? In those days, a lot of times when there was an injury, it just stayed and it just dogged them until their death. So in all likelihood, he always kind of had a little bit of an unstable walk.

And it says: And Jacob lifted up his eyes and lo and behold, Esau was coming. And I love this part because it goes ahead and tells us that the 400 men, sure enough, 400 men were with him. So here's what Jacob did.

Now we remember those of us who were in the first half of the series together, we know that he did a lot of conniving and planning. We're going to see how much he really brings to pass at this point because here's what happens. It says he divides the children among the mothers, here's Leah and Rachel and their children; here's the servants with them. And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah and her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all.

But notice something very important here. Verse three, he himself went on... what is the next word? Ahead of them -- he went before them. Do you remember over and over, check it out! All over Genesis chapter 32, he was saying, "And Jacob, he's coming behind us." Always hiding behind the people; cushion us from the person we're not wanting to face. Have you ever needed to really face someone and not just because it is a biblical command to take another witness but because you just wanted protection. Take a whole group with you so that person will be nice to you. Anybody?

Only this time, something's happened. Because this time, Jacob is right out front -- right out front. Because you see, once we've wrestled with God and lived through it, we can face almost anything -- almost anything! He's ready to go face him. What I just love is he faces him. He walks on ahead of them with his limp -- with his limp. You know what occurred to me? You know what? We have all got a limp. We all do. I need you to know, I have got a limp! You don't live 55 years on planet earth unscathed. Hurts happen... injuries happen. All of us have scars. All of us have wounds. All of us do! Life's tough! It's tough!

So we've all got a limp of some kind wrestling through life on planet earth but we do our best to hide it. Why? Because I'm going to tell you something, actually, we're going to see Esau run to him and I wonder, if we could make the point that when we are not so careful to hide our limp and when we want everybody to think we've got it together, we are no longer even approachable.

But when they can see, I too have been injured, I've been hurt, I've been rejected, I've been betrayed, I have been more secure... or more insecure than anybody you know. Then that frees them up to approach without their own hiding. I love it!

He went ahead of them. And it says something really strange. In verse three it says:

And he went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother.

So here he comes. Now picture this because you need to know that there's like getting up and getting down seven times but there's nothing like doing that all with a fresh limp. His hip joint is pulled out. So I want you to picture the discomfort that while he's walking toward his brother Esau, he is getting down on the ground and he is bowing seven times.

Now that's so bizarre to us. If we would did that today, people would be like, "Get up! What are you doing?"

[Laughter]

But in their world, it was what someone would do if they were submitting to someone else. It's how they would show -- listen -- I come to you as one that is greater than myself. I come to you -- I present myself before you with humility. I will present myself before you as inferior to how I see you. So it would be -- like somebody would do this before their king. This is something that their world understood.

But here it's even more fascinating because it is the echo of Isaac's blessing way back in Genesis 27, that he thought he was giving to his firstborn son, but he gives it to Jacob instead because Jacob has tricked him and he has dressed up as his brother Esau. But listen to this. He says, "May nations bow down before you and your mother's sons bow down before you."

So in this demonstration, you're going to see over and over how Jacob is attempting to give back the blessing to his brother Esau because once the Lord got a hold of him and blessed him, he did not need anything else anybody could give him. Do not miss that.

[Applause]

Oh, I'd say so. He said, "You have it. Have it back." So when it was spoken, "Your brother will bow down before you," he knew that Jacob thought he was saying that over Esau so Jacob says, "I'll bow down. I'll bow down before my brother." So he bowed down before him seven solid times. And it says then: But Esau -- I just love this! Verse four: But Esau ran to meet him and he embraced him and fell on his neck and he kissed him and they wept.

What in the world? What in the world? What grace! What beauty! We don't know was this always on Esau's mind? Did he change his mind when he saw Jacob? We have no way of knowing. I'm constantly in a situation, in a narrative, when I want to say, "Lord, give me a little more than that!"

If a woman had written it, we would know what they smelled like. We would know everything about it. We'd know every single detail. What did they say to the person standing beside them? What did they look like? What was the expression... But men were inspired to write this so we're left just going, "What happened there?"

[Laughter]

And I want to know did he plan it? Why were the 400 men with him? What changed when he saw him? Why did he need the 400 men if he was just going to run and hug him? I think maybe when he saw him, have you ever made a monster out of somebody until you saw them again? You're not near the monster I made you out to be.

He just ran to him. After his brother's bowing down. Runs to him! And he just grabs him and embraces him. He falls on his neck and he just kisses him. And it says that they began to weep. I don't know -- I can't even think when that would have been... I

would have ever seen face-to-face two men literally just weep in one another's arms but it would be a powerful scene. Much more so – Women can do that when they just go like, "Oh, you look precious! You look darling!" We could do that but like two men just crying their eyes out. It's so, so powerful what happens in this scene.

It says in verse five:

And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and the children he said, "Who are these with you?" And Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given to your servant."

Do you hear this subservient talk? Then the servants drew near and they and their children and bowed down and Leah likewise and her children and bowed down, and the last, Joseph and Rachel drew near, they bowed down. Esau saw the rest of them. He sees all his gifts now, all these servants, all these animals. He says, "What do you mean by all of this company that I have met?"

A sweet thing. I have a very close connection with women who have taken part in the Bible studies. They will say to me, "You probably find this weird but I feel like you're my friend." What they don't know that's even weirder is I feel it too. Sometimes I will feel it in advance. I'll sense that someone has Christ on them; they may have no familiarity with the studies whatsoever but I will sense the spirit of Christ on somebody before it has even come up. It's a powerful, powerful thing.

We see this so beautifully as they come together in a way that is completely unexpected. When I meet someone and I'll say to them as I begin to hug them, I'll look around and I'll see their family, "Who are these?" Get down and talk to those children. Reach out and shake her husband's hand. Hug the women, and shake the men's hands. That's what was happening here. He was just looking around going, "Who are all of these? Who are all of these?"

Jacob says, "They're those that God has graciously given to your servant."

And he says -- I love this because he says, Esau says, "What do you mean by all of this?"

And so Jacob answers him in verse eight and says, "I want to give them to you so that I might find favor in your sight."

And Esau says something powerful in verse nine.

But Esau says, "I have enough, brother. Keep what you have for yourself."

What an unusual thing to be said in our day of excess. When was the last time we just went, "I have enough! I just have enough."

End of clip

In the studio

James: I don't think we hear that very often. I think it is a "give me" mentality.

Dear God, I pray you would really deliver us from that sense of never having enough, especially as it relates to stuff, accumulation. Lord, I pray that we'll want you to have more of us and for you to be filling us to overflowing. We thank you for Beth. In Jesus' name, we give you praise.

I want to show you something that I think is going to inspire you. You know when I opened the program I held up a little Christmas shoe. Well, here's what we want to do with your help and boy, when I say we want to do it with your help, there's not a single thing that we ever do on *LIFE Today* and *LIFE Outreach* that is not something that we want to do and that we includes you. When we find a need that we believe should be met in love, we seek to meet it.

But the fact is, we can't do any worthwhile thing unless you agree. And when we see all of these little dirty feet with cuts and infections all over the world, we thought, many of these children never had shoes and let's do that. And I'll tell you, just hold up a little shoe like that and it just touches everybody's heart but this little kid's real important too.

I want you to listen to one of our dear friends on the mission field and listen to what Tammy says about what we can do. This is something I know, it is way ahead of time but we have to do it ahead of time because we can do something very special for Christmas, and I think there is not a single one of you watching that won't realize I can do something. Just listen.

On the mission field

Tammy: Something that we take so for granted is wearing a pair of shoes every day. I don't think any one of us watching this right now is without a pair of shoes but the reality is that there are hundreds of children around me at this moment that have no shoes. I love *LIFE Outreach* for so many reasons -- not just Water for Life or Rescue for Life or the food programs but even bringing shoes to little ones.

Listen, without it, they're in danger every single day. The simple things that we think about like even cutting your feet, walking in water that is diseased and full of bacteria getting into a cut. They could literally lose their life. What a privilege we have to bring them a pair of shoes. Every one of these little ones is going to get a pair of shoes today.

Tammy: What I love is that this simple pair of shoes has become a treasure to this little girl. I love that she is holding on to it like it's the greatest gift she's ever been given. And it costs very little! For a little amount of money we can produce thousands of shoes that can change a life, one child at a time, starting with her.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty, you and I walked in areas that weren't even fit for you to be in with shoes on and saw these beautiful little feet. You remember we were in Central America and I prayed.

I saw a little girl, I guess maybe her big brown eyes reminded me of our little girls when they were her age -- big brown eyes. I prayed she would come. I prayed that little girl would come back and I wanted to sit down and talk to her. She came back and amazingly sat in my lap; I just loved her.

But we saw children that were in the hospital dying from diseases that they got infections from their feet. And you're holding this beautiful little Christmas --

Betty: I can assure you there will be one on our tree this year! I love it! I think about the precious feet of children. When our children were small, babies, I just loved to kiss the bottom of their little feet. And I look at these children and you probably wouldn't want to kiss the bottom of their feet because so many of them do get disease from all the cuts and all the things that they have to walk through every day of their life.

I think it is so wonderful that we have the opportunity to put shoes on their feet. I look at the small size. We all like the small size. Aren't they cute? They're so cute! But I think if we can start with them this young then they will get to be this size without all the disease and infection.

So I hope you will join us. Put a smile on their faces. I love to see the shine on their faces when they smile. It is a gift to them. They don't really realize probably at what depth it is going to help them but they are happy to have the shoes.

James: Well, when you give shoes to these little children, and these will last a long time, they've got an adjustable strap so they can actually grow into them and get them a little bit larger than they need initially, and they will last quite a while. When they see that love coming and we're able to tell them that it came because God put love in our heart, it opens the way for the missionaries that's indescribable.

Here's what I'd like to ask you to do. If you give \$36 we've got ten pair of shoes. You give \$144 and we've got 40 pairs of shoes. We're asking others to consider giving \$1,000 and we're going to give smiles for Christmas and shoes, we're going to do cleft palate surgery, and other facial surgeries that are desperately needed.

So if you can help us, just dial the number. Take your bankcard and make the gift God put on your heart. Surely you can give some shoes. It may be that you can give more than we even suggested but it seems most of you watching could give ten pairs of shoes, even children do that. But would you please help us? You can go online LifeToday.org to make your gift.

We're going to send the beautiful Christmas ornament, we'll send the bronze "Christian." A missionary rescuing a boy that lived literally underground in the sewers, and that's an outreach that we've done for children to give them a home too.

But right now we want you to help give shoes. I pray you'll go to the phone or go online. Make the gift God puts on your heart.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it, children needlessly suffer not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we take for granted such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes. For most of these children, they've never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in the light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections that could lead to crippling consequences, disease, and even death.

By responding today you can help *LIFE* immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas shoes to 200,000 children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$144 will help provide 40 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

In appreciation of your gift, be sure to request our 2013 Christmas shoe ornament. This beautifully crafted antiqued ornament is a unique reminder of your gift for Christmas shoes, a treasure to place on your tree each holiday season.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries. And you may request the limited edition 50th anniversary bronze sculpture, "Christian" by renowned artist Robert Summers.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip**In the studio**

James: I am anxious to send you one of these beautiful, beautiful little Christmas ornaments because it's basically a testimony. You're going to have people ask you about it, maybe as much as anything you have on the tree.

And then remember the beautiful bronze, "Christian." This little fellow lived in the sewers of Romania, literally in the underground drainage. Our daughter Rhonda, our oldest daughter held him just like this; this particular girl is a missionary. We're sending that to those of you who will make a \$1,000 gift. Remember to give smiles,

surgeries for cleft palates, shoes and smiles for Christmas. Great gift! All in love.
Thank you for watching. Thank all of you for being here with us.