

Week 36

9/2/13

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty Robison and this is James.

James: And we have a couple that are quite miraculous. You have a situation here where a Christian couple, and for whatever reason the woman slipped, had a relationship and of all things found herself pregnant; then talks to her husband. You're going to hear about the journey. We actually had the opportunity of talking to this remarkable couple; and a man that extended as much grace as you could ever witness. And you're going to hear the consideration the woman had to terminate the child, desperation, even though it's the last thing she believed in, she was desperate. And the husband insisted not only that he offer grace and forgiveness but they had the child and they adopt it and give that child his name to join with their other three beautiful children.

I want you to welcome Bob and Audrey Meisner back to *LIFE Today*.

Audrey: Thank you so much!

James: You were remarkable in my opinion, Bob to be able to extend... just real briefly, how in the world were you able to forgive, restore, and love something that came from a relationship that was totally inappropriate and make that precious child, and I almost start crying, because I was nearly aborted but how did it happen that you had that grace?

Bob: Again, it is a journey. It is nothing that is short or immediate. It is not something that happens in the moment but it is a process. So what you're looking for is something that is far greater than yourself. You're facing a life situation that is life-altering for your marriage, for your family. This could forever, if you choose, be your defining moment. But I refused to allow circumstances to determine and dictate our life.

What I wanted to know was the realities of God, the things that you talk about, the things that we preach about. I really wanted to know the extravagance of my father's love and his grace because I knew that this little baby that was the by-product of a sexual affair, but you see the thing is that this little baby's innocent. You see? He's not

the result of a sexual affair. He is not an accident. He is not a mistake but he's born out of the heart of God and given to us. So I knew that it was necessary for me to experience my Father's love so that I could be a father that loves.

So as I get free then I'm transformed and I get to experience it and it becomes my reality rather than just something that you talk about. So God heals and restores but we wanted to live it out. I didn't want it to be something that was fictional or just a good sermon or something that you would read in your Bible but can the realities of God truly be yours? Can Christ in you be that hope, that confidence, that assurance, knowing that his realities will become yours -- that's glorious!

James: And you had to be, I think amazed, at that grace. Were you not?

Audrey: As I was sitting here I was going, oh, my gosh, am I ever thankful for this man! I'm so thankful for this man and for his grace and his mercy!

James: And you did see the love that he's talking about?

Audrey: Oh, absolutely! Absolutely!

James: It was bigger than him, as much as you loved him and appreciate him.

Audrey: And God's love is so undeserving to us; right? And it was so undeserved. Because here I am... I still remember the moment coming out of that doctor's office, as you can imagine. I had told him, here I am, I'm walking out of this doctor's office, just found out I was pregnant, the baby is bi-racial, will not look like the other kids. I'm now going to be known for that most stupid, selfish choice I ever made.

I had just told him, two weeks, as soon as the affair ended. I said, "Bob, I'm done with that. I want you. I want our marriage." And we thought we were going to be okay but then this news comes of this baby. I remember thinking, I might be forever defined by this moment and disqualified, victim of my mistake, my regret.

James: You had to feel unworthy. There had to be some change.

Audrey: And I sit here today thinking... I kind of think like when Jesus died, he left an inheritance for us. Sometimes we have all these presents, like if we're co-heir with him, we have all these presents in front of us and it would take a lifetime to open them all but the best gift I ever opened was his righteousness -- like it was never mine. I opened

this gift that Jesus died for my sin and my shame but he gave me the gift of his righteousness.

I'm so amazed with how beautiful his righteousness is that when I'm consumed with that then I naturally don't even want to get drawn to sin. You realize how sin is such a painful, awful thing that you're just amazed with him and his... and he says our righteousness is like filthy rags anyway; right? Who was it for us to think that we can work our way out of this?

Bob: And what we try to do then is work diligently to be clean. I've made the mess, now I'm going to clean it up. So we want to live the clean life now again. God, I'm going to prove to you. I'm not going to mess up this time.

But you see, there is a difference between being clean and being free. That's what we wanted in our relationship, although we had the best marriage imaginable for 17 years it brought us to this point. Therefore you can't just go back trying to retrieve or regain what was because what was has brought you to this place. Therefore with God there's all kinds of new hope because he is a God of new beginnings.

In other words, he's got something new for us never seen before. So would we allow God to open our heart and give us vision for what is yet ahead so that the past does not have to continue to dictate and determine your future, but would we be able to embrace the truth of God that we might experience his grace? His grace unto knowing what his righteousness looks like -- to know what it is to be full of joy and to really be free. For he who is set free is free indeed. Stand firm in that liberty. So we didn't want to just exist, survive, get by, and be okay with each other. We wanted the realities of God to be ours.

Betty: And to do that you had to start really with forgiveness. You had to forgive her but you had to forgive yourself. That's tough.

Audrey: I really did. Yeah, it was! Because like I'm going to tell you right here, and you mentioned it when you started the show, three days after that doctor's appointment I was alone in my kitchen and I was on the phone, and I called the abortion clinic. Nobody knew I was going to do it and I called them and I said -- told them my situation and they said, "Oh, don't worry about it. You just have to take ten pills. We'll send them to you anonymously in the mail, just take ten pills, one a week, and after ten weeks your problem will be gone."

I fell to the floor. I said, "Jesus, I know." I mean I'm a Jesus girl. All my life, I know better. Like what you said, and I fell on the floor and I said, "Jesus, I know this is not your answer but God," I remember these specific words, "if you love me you will take this from me." And I begged God for a miscarriage.

And I think of that now and the reason I start to get choked up is because I think, don't we always have a great idea for how he could answer our prayers, right? Is it not bad enough that I want to control my husband?

Bob: You got yourself in a bad situation.

Audrey: Oh, yeah and I mean as a woman I have to fight not controlling my husband and my kids but I want to control him too. Like *I've* got this perfect plan.

[Laughter]

Thanks for the verification -- just confirm that.

Bob: Just every now and then.

James: She's post-qualified.

Audrey: Yeah! So I'm saying, "God, if you'll love me you'll take this from me." But you see, in essence what I was praying is, "God, evacuate me out of my circumstances." And I think that's what we want to do. But I sit here today and the tears come because I say because God loved me, he didn't answer that prayer.

He said, "Audrey, I'm not going to evacuate you out but girl, I'm going to walk you through every moment of this pregnancy -- every month, month by month I'm going to be with you though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Fear no evil for I am going to comfort you, I'm going to be with you in your pain. You're going to know me like you've never known me before. When you come out the other side, you're never the same. You come out with authority and you come out with passion."

But then came the journey of what you asked me, Betty, about liking myself again or forgiving myself. That was tough!

James: That actually led to this publication and there's a beautiful smile of someone that looks like the smile of a soul and a heart and a life set free. And the title is, *Like Yourself, Love Your Life*: Overcome big mistakes and celebrate true beauty. Well, she

didn't feel beautiful anyway. But what she found out was, the real beauty was the Lord Jesus and his righteousness, which they both already alluded to and referred to. And it is not by works of righteousness, it is not by what we've done but what he does and what he does in us. And the joy that you see in that smile and the countenance that you see here with a couple, it's both of them, it's not like we're going to watch another one endure and we're going to be okay. No, they've got the song of the soul set free.

The book is available. It is in the bookstores. I want to ask you this though; you are interested in helping couples. You could go as an author and a speaker and you've done a lot of women's conferences and so forth but you really feel like you're both called together. So if people wanted you to come to their community or their church where they would really get behind it and get people there that need to know they can be better than okay, how would they go online or where would they find you?

Bob: They can visit our web site, MyNewDay.tv and they can find us there. Because this was a journey that we did together, it wasn't something apart. But I had to -- because I wanted my wife to be free. We don't want to just -- again, get through this but that meant... because what we can so easily do is fall back into old patterns, old lifestyle, things that are familiar.

But you see, people hold a dream in their heart, they have a dream for their marriage, for their family, for a future but they're unwilling to risk what is familiar and comfortable in their life to begin to venture out and allow the realities of God to become theirs. So we had to be able to create space for one another to begin to experience their journey to wholeness, and that's what this book is about for Audrey.

James: You were dealing with shame; right? -- Big time?

Audrey: Let me describe it like this. I was thinking about this last week. I knew I was going to come and meet you guys and I love you guys so much!

Bob: Happy anniversary! Wow!

Audrey: Yeah, we're really excited for you guys. But I was walking and what it really felt like for those months and years, people all knew what I had done but I felt like I had been locked into a prison cell of shame and regret to the point where it was clanged shut, this huge lock and someone had thrown away the key.

Yeah, I might be a Jesus girl but I'm going to live a life sentence of everybody knowing the stupid and selfish thing I did. She's the girl. She calls herself a Jesus girl. She's laughing! What is that about? Like she should be paying for what she did. I could have stuck a disqualified victim the rest of my life but that did not happen.

James: I'm telling you, and I referred to this earlier, there are people watching us all over the world right now who have disqualified yourself, you haven't been disqualified, you disqualified yourself in light of this would seem very trivial but it is big because it is caused you to get shame. And then a lot of times if you talk to religious people they seem to heap more blame and shame on with it. But not God! How did you find out he wasn't and get past it?

Audrey: This is the best part! This is the best part of the whole show because the fact is, there is so much hope and I just feel like -- can you tell that I want to shout it from the housetop? -- That if Jesus can do this for me, he can do it for you, where he not only opened that prison door where I was able to see myself the way he sees me, not the way everyone else or even myself.

When I came into agreement with how Jesus feels about me, his daughter, his precious, precious princess purchased with a life. He took a bullet for me and said, "I'm going to pay for you, girl so you can be so full of joy and life. This death is not going to hold you down. You rose with me and I'm going to set you free." So just start by visualizing yourself completely robed in the righteousness; see yourself the way I see you. Then start walking and start facing all the hidden fears..." (all the lies that I believed all these years,) be willing to face this tough stuff because I've had an interesting response to this book.

It's actually surprised me because it is kind of a fun unfiltered book. I get a little edgy because I just want to have fun with people. To be honest, that is really a high priority for me anyone that knows me because I just love how God created laughter and he wanted to -- the enemy wanted to steal that away from me for the rest of my life and it is contagious when you have the joy of the Lord, and it is our strength. That is such a resource. I think about how that was stolen from me. But the interesting thing about the response to this book is it is fun and it is unfiltered, but it is for the courageous. It is for that woman who is tired, weary, exhausted, and is in that prison hoping that if she jumps through enough hoops and does enough right things and does all the right things, maybe one day someone will open that prison door and she will walk through.

But yet it is a supernatural experience where she will see the real her is the one that Jesus created to laugh and dance, and dance over and delight in, and to be free to love

and smile and see the smile of God. If everyone could just see that God is not mad at you, he is smiling at you. And he says, "No matter how tired you are, the real you is in there and don't give up. Find out how I feel about you." See that's what Jesus is saying. I want that message to be so real.

You know as girls -- I'm going to tell you something about girls. I know you're married to Betty; you probably figured this out. We are so hard on ourselves! You have no idea what kind of self talk goes on in here. I'm so nice to everybody. I would never say a mean word to you in your life! But I say mean stuff to myself. I look in the mirror and go, "Oh, my gosh, girl. You have eaten too much bread! You like sugar way too much! And you put butter on that bread and it tastes good and it is warm." And I feel so much comfort by my bread.

James: It ain't just girls saying that, girl!

[Laughter]

It's really right.

Audrey: I would never tell Betty she ate too much bread. Of course, she obviously doesn't eat too much bread.

James: I want you to tell us this, how is that boy?

Audrey: Oh! You want to talk about something fun. I want you to meet him one day. Because there's something special about him because there is something -- when you were talking today, when you opened your show and you said you were almost aborted, I said, "I want you to meet Robert one day." He actually reminds me of you a little bit.

James: We're showing everybody a picture of the whole family. It's quite a beautiful family.

Bob: Yeah, he's 11 years old. He is finishing the 5th grade. He is just awesome!

Audrey: He is a nut cake.

Bob: His middle name -- his first name is Robert, mine, because I don't want him ever to question and wonder one day in his life, whose boy he is. The middle name is Theodore, which is divine gift because he is not an accident. He is not a mistake.

Audrey: There is so much fun and laughter.

I'll tell you another thing. Like the bus stop. When they meet me and they say, "How come that boy is dark?"

I'll say, "Oh, have a got a story for you!" Then I say in one second. "It has a happy ending but I had an affair and I got pregnant but my husband gave him his name because God is real."

And they walk away going, "I'll give you something to talk about." Like she's -- Who is that woman? It's like she --

Bob: T.M.I. -- too much information right here.

Audrey: You know what? There is no shame attached. How can I do that and be that and not have the shame attached? That's nuts! That's not real. That's supernatural.

James: Do you appreciate this couple? Do you appreciate the great God, the one that took the shame and took the blame? This is real and this is the beauty of God.

The book is in the bookstores. There is the web site where you can say, "Hey, I'd like to have this joy come to our town! And I'd like our couples to hear it." Because most couples just hang in there and let the rough end drag and it ain't much fun. And it just ain't a good deal; it's just not the way we're supposed to live. So I just praise God for you. I love you both and I thank you for so effectively sharing about the grace of God and his power and his love.

I want to show all of our viewers something that I know you like. And all I have to do is pick up a little shoe like this, you think about a little foot going in that. A lot of us, we've got some of our shoes of our children and people bronze them and keep them and you should, they are precious. These little feet that will get the shoes like this and this particular shoe, they in most instances never had a shoe. And they will grow up to be bigger children that didn't have shoes.

And we started a few years ago giving Christmas shoes and smiles. And we start way ahead to do it because in order to get it, and get the 200,000 pairs of shoes and I wish we could go beyond that and that depends on you because \$36 will give ten kids shoes. I want you to listen to one of our missionary partners. I want you to listen to

Tammy and look at these beautiful children and then think about them all over the world. Would you give them some shoes? Watch this.

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 antiques 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

On the mission field

Betty: Yeah! Isn't that great? I like this! You can't beat this. This is topnotch in my heart, I'll tell you what. To be able to put some shoes on these children's feet that will help protect them from all the disease and the harm that comes. You know that not only can you put shoes on this little boy's feet and all those here in the village but we can do it all around the world if you'll just help us? Isn't that wonderful? The opportunity to be able to do just something so simple but so needed? Thank you so much!

End of clip

In the studio

James: We are going to send the beautiful little Christmas ornament to all of you for any gift that you make and I hope if you can give 40 children shoes you will.

If you could help us give shoes and smiles, we're sending the bronze of Christian. This is an actual sculpture of a boy named Christian that lived in the underground sewers, along with many other children in Romania; we built them a home. Our daughter held this boy, our oldest daughter did. This happens to be a sculpture of a missionary girl holding the boy. But we gave him a future. Well, we want to give a lot of children shoes but we also want to give some smiles so we want to thank you for that.

Betty and I want to say thanks to Audrey and to Bob. What a testimony! What a story! The book, *Like Yourself, Love Your Life*, because it is his life working in us. You want to know more about them, you can go on our web site. We'll direct you to theirs. But there is their web site.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks again to Audrey and to Bob?

Thank you both! The Lord is on you. The beauty of the Lord is on you. And we bless God for you.

Thank all of you for watching. Thank you so much for helping us love others.