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Week 37: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

James Robison

Personal Freedom #1

James: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I really feel like we want to have the opportunity of actually walking in your home. We wish we could be there in person. Some of you say, "Not now, not where I am. It's early in the morning, James." -- Or whatever time you're watching. But somehow, Betty and I really want to connect with you as though someone you knew loved you and really cared about whatever load you're bearing, whatever weight, whatever concern; that two people really do from the depth of their heart sincerely care about you if you will give me an opportunity to just talk to you.

I know now at age 71, I'm old enough to be nearly everybody's dad, many people's granddad and now I'm a great-grandfather; I've been around a while. I know what it feels like to wonder if anybody understands what you may feel or experience facing certain situations at certain times in your life. And if in fact they knew would they care?

Well, Betty and I care. We care more than perhaps we can share in a short period of time but we want to. I've said to you if you watch very often that we all need a shoulder to lean on; and I try to encourage all of our viewers to seek to become the shoulder someone leans on. Well, you just lean in here on us and know this, the one person that not only cares perfectly about everything that concerns you is the one who can most effectively brighten your day and lighten the load -- and his name is Jesus. And he is not a religious figure or historical figure alone, he is a living person. He really wants to come into your situation right now and let you know that you are loved more than words can adequately describe -- but his actions did because he gave his life to give us life; life abundant, life that is indescribably glorious, even in the face of the most fierce attacks, deepest valleys and greatest pain. He is our shepherd leading us beside still waters, even in the valley of the shadow of death. He will be with us; and even in the face of enemies prepare a table before us.

We are living in very perilous times. I was really thrilled when I saw what one of my friends is doing; his name is Dr. David Jeremiah. We got this incredible packet titled, *Agents of Babylon*. When you look at what he's doing... Dr. Jeremiah, let me just say to you I love you! I love you, sir -- and your wonderful church -- "*A Journey Back to the Future*."

But in here he asks, "Is America right now becoming like a 21st Century Babylon?" Dr. Jeremiah, I think so. And I know you're going to help us. That's what we want to do right now because we are facing very difficult and challenging times.

But God is interested in you; and no matter what happens around us he wants to be not only involved in your situation, he wants you to be totally committed to the commission and call and the reason that he's left us here. So no matter what you're going through, you're here by divine assignment. You need not look for an escape. You need to enter in and live -- think about this -- live in the shelter and the shadow of the Shepherd and the Father. And say, "I am here as an agent of God" -- not Babylon. "I'm here as a part of his body, his family, the church of the living God. And I'm here on a mission. And whatever I go through, whatever fiery trial, whatever storm, whatever flood, I've got a Savior who can walk on troubled water, calm every storm and give me peace. And I'm here not only to receive that peace and that comfort but I'm here with the peace and comfort that I receive from Him to release that toward others -- and yes, myself become a shoulder for someone to lean on."

Right where you are I want you to just within your mind right now say, "Jesus, I know you're here and I know you leaving me here at this time in human history was no mistake. I am here by divine assignment on a divine god-centered, Christ-exalting mission."

Betty, we've talked a lot of times about how God will use a remnant. There are going to be some people who are simply not going to give in to what the gates of hell and deception thrust on them. Do you believe that we are about to see a great remnant stand up and not only love Jesus but love the people he died for, and we're going to begin to see him revealed in those people?

Betty: I think we are, James. I think we're already beginning to see the remnant come forth. And it is those that are really, really committed to God and say, "No matter what, God, I will stand true to your Word and to what you've done in my life and how you've changed my life. I will be a light in the darkness. I will stand strong because my strength is in you."

And I think, James, we're going to start seeing those lights coming up all around us and it's going to get bright. I really believe people that are desperate and they're hurting, they're going to go toward that light -- and that light is Jesus. We won't have to explain; they're just going to sense and know it is the Spirit of God. And they're going to say, "I want that. I want that light that I see. I want that devotion to God that I see in you." It is not religion, it is relationship and that's what we're talking about, that relationship with God that will literally transform a person.

James: I'm telling you, that's why we're here. That's why we're talking to you right now. When Jesus ascended into heaven; now think about this, everybody was thinking about how he was

going to come later and set everything in order himself. And suddenly he is crucified, then miraculously raised from the grave, and now he is about to ascend into heaven. And they want to know is this the time you're going to establish the kingdom right here and we can just see it and you're going to do it?

He said you don't need to get caught up in a discussion of the times and seasons. But I want you to know you're going to receive power -- the power of the Holy Spirit. And you are to be witnesses unto me beginning at home, in Jerusalem to them, and to their neighboring communities and the ends of the earth.

So here's what you need to understand. Jesus is coming back. But Jesus has already come. He has taken our death, our sin, our guilt, our shame, and he has died and been raised to fulfill the Word of God, the Old Testament, to show us what can happen when Jesus is here. He gave us, through his death and resurrection and his promises, everything we need pertaining to life, life, life -- and godliness. Not religion -- godliness, and total trust in him. Now he's left us here to be his witnesses.

Now think about this, when Jesus first announced why he's here, in Luke chapter four he makes it so very, very clear. Listen to the Word of God. Listen to what Jesus says. He is referring to what Isaiah said: The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to those who need good news. And he sent me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and set free those who are downtrodden. He came to give us personal liberty and personal freedom.

And he said, "If you abide in me and my words..." In other words, if you will listen to what I'm saying, and you will say, "I will live according to what you say," you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. We're not set free from the battles. We're not set free from the challenges. We're not set free from the tempter or the enemy, he is there. We are set free to move into the real battle with powers and principalities, rulers in the heavenly realm that manipulate people like puppets on strings but they're not to manipulate us. We're to be overcomers. We will miss the mark. We will fail. And when we call upon him he forgives, covers, and lifts us up. We do not need to live under condemnation.

So you may say, "I have failed." Just tell him, he knows it, "You died to cover it. You took the shame and the blame and the guilt. Now I receive what you've done. Live your resurrected life in me. Let others see you living in me." And you focus on him, see him in everything he created, recognize him in others, and see in the lives of those through discernment who don't have that love, that life, that light, and love them.

Remember this: If he left us here on a mission, it is a mission that he wants to be fulfilled. And no matter how trying the times, no matter how great the opposition -- and by the way, the Christian faith is being assaulted around the world but we do not need to fear evil for the Lord is with us. He is our shepherd, he is our shelter, he is our source, he is our security. That's a fact! We don't need an escape. We've got it. Yes, he is coming but he is coming for a bride that looks like him. That's us! And we're going to be so in love with him that people will see him in us, in his church before he comes in glory for a church that is adorned in that glory. So we have been left here on a divine assignment.

Now I want you to think about this. This is very powerful. Galatians chapter one, Jesus said, Paul talking about him, "It is for freedom that Christ set you free."

Betty, think about that. It is for freedom that Christ set us free. The first verse I read, Jesus said, "I came to set the captives free." Now you think about this. If it is for freedom that Christ set us free, when does freedom suddenly become of little importance? Freedom is a gift Jesus gives. Freedom is a gift from Father God. Freedom is a gift that blesses everyone -- the just and the unjust, and it gives us an opportunity to be productive and fruitful in freedom, not bondage. The entire Old Testament stories are people getting in bondage and needing freedom and God giving them deliverance, and then in foolishness abusing it and not respecting it and highly regarding the freedom that they have in protecting that freedom, and living free, and then they lose their freedom and move into bondage.

One of the things when Dr. Jeremiah talks about Babylon, you're going to find they had no choice. The consequences of idolatry had caused them to lose their freedom. We're in the process in America and much of the free world of losing freedom. Are you going to shrug about that -- about what Jesus came to give you? What he died and was raised to enable us to have and experience? And what some of our forefathers and founders and great Christian leaders and great preachers and prophet voices gave us, enabling us to bless the world? To truly be not only as the church and believers a shining city set on a hill but in so many ways even a nation that experienced such glorious freedom we could bless the nations of the world.

Are we going to sit back and allow the gates of hell to take away what freedom has offered us while we sit at home and just wait for him to get us out of here? Or are we going to storm the gates of hell?

Beginning right where you are say, "God is in my situation. He loves me. He cares about me. He wants to lift the load. And he wants me to help brighten someone else's day and lighten the load." He wants us to overcome deception and darkness and defeat and destruction. We do not have to let our freedoms be destroyed.

Betty, I talked to you a few weeks ago, while I was out of town. And you had just seen what we put on the *stream* and what many publications were putting out in the newspapers where they were selling little baby body parts. In one of them they had just shown a little baby's parts, little hands and arms, and you couldn't even talk to me. What was going on in you when you began to weep after what you had seen on all major news outlets?

Betty: James, it broke my heart because I thought that there we're watching people destroy -- and I can't describe it any better than it is murder, James. We're killing the innocent. We're legally killing the innocent, the baby that has no opportunity to grow up and see what God wants them to be.

God's already planted within them things that he has called them to do and we're destroying that opportunity for these precious little ones, James. We've destroyed leaders in our country. We've destroyed people that would love God and serve God with all their hearts. We will never see them because their opportunity, their life has been snatched from them. And it just broke my heart as I thought, how can we come to this point in life where that means nothing? That we're null and void of feelings for people that are killed like that, James? I had to turn away from it.

I wanted to get on my face and just cry out to God. And I did! I said, "God, what are we doing?" When we value the life of an animal more than we do the life of a child? And we can legally say, "Oh, this is going to help people that have diseases and stuff." At what sacrifice? Sacrifice of that child in that womb that doesn't have an opportunity to call out, "Mom! Dad! Jesus, will you come into my life?"

O Lord! I'm asking, God, please bring us to a point to where we say, "God, we have sinned against you. Please forgive us and show us how we can change our ways and live as you put us here to live" -- with purpose, James.

James: And that is precisely what Christians can do. In Babylon, they had no choice. Today we have allowed this present day holocaust to occur because we've not had the concern she expressed. She said to me, "James, we watched our first little grandson in our daughter's hand because he was stillborn five months in the womb -- stillborn. He was perfect. She said, "I saw those little parts and I saw that little boy."

As believers, yes, as part of this remnant we have too long been too indifferent, too uninvolved and that must change. I believe God wants those of you who have watched this program, those of you who are listening today, you have learned that when we see a need we can find great joy, peace, and fulfillment in meeting it, whatever it is, however small or great it is. If it is food or water or getting people out of sexual bondage and trafficking, or giving children a gift of love, you found what that blessing is.

Right now, now listen to me, we wouldn't even have an opportunity to stop this holocaust if it hadn't been for a faithful remnant of Christians and people who love life and who love freedom, who have never stopped standing up for life. We are gaining tremendous momentum. We have an opportunity right now to correct course. Prayer was removed from the public and being more and more removed because we quit praying enough at home.

Well, we're going to start praying more at home. And people are going to start praying everywhere whenever the spirit moves on them. We're not going to allow freedom, which is a gift from God; it is for freedom that Christ set you free. It is a gift to bless everyone. Freedom is a blessing to everyone. It's what Christ gives us personally.

But you can have it for your family. You don't have to give part of your family to the enemy. You don't have to give part of your community to the enemy. You don't have to give your city or your state or your country -- you don't have to give any part of God's creation to the one who's committed to destroy it.

If Jesus said the gates of hell shall not prevail then they must not prevail. And the church of the living God and his kingdom force is what withholds the power of death and destruction. We have come into your home today to let you know how much Father God wants to hold you in his arms and how much Father God wants to reveal his heart and his will through you. How we, as his body, literally become the expression of his life and his love and we put his arms around a hurting world.

Father, I'm praying for every person today, listening and watching, that carries a heavy load that you would lift that load, that you would indeed brighten their day, that you would meet every need miraculously. And that as they walk through challenges they'll know they're not walking alone. Would you give them comfort and peace? And then would you give them the desire and the spiritual strength to begin to comfort others with the same comfort and to release the river of life and love freely on a dry and thirsty land; in Jesus' name.

You see the telephone number there on the screen? That's a prayer line for you. You may say, "I need somebody to agree with me. I want to be a part of that faithful remnant. I want to be one who stands up as light uncovered, part of a shining city, illuminating the way, standing against the forces of death and destruction fearlessly for the glory of God." And you may want someone to pray with you. That line is there paid for by love. Don't hesitate to call. If you get a busy keep calling until you get through, and begin praying for others that are getting help.

Then I want you to know that we have an opportunity right now to do something that you love to do. This is that time of the year when we simply say let's do something special for others that

have so little at Christmas. How about we give little children that need cleft palate or facial surgery, how about we give them a smile because of love? And how about we put some shoes on their feet? That's one of the first things the father did for the prodigal when he came home. He gave him some shoes. And we can have our feet shod with the gospel of peace and we can express love by a simple gesture. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: From your family to our family, your generosity has empowered *LIFE*'s mission efforts around the world -- and the look on these children's faces makes the impact obvious. It's in the smile of Mateo as he receives a bowl of food made possible by your giving or of Gabriella as she quenches her thirst from a clean water well that you helped drill. You could even say you make it your business to give children smiles.

Well, this Christmas we'd like to give a smile to someone who might not easily be able to smile otherwise. You see, all over the world there are children who have trouble smiling because they were born with a cleft lip or palate. But a simple surgery by loving doctors can radically transform the appearance of children like these and greatly improve their quality of life.

But they won't be the only ones smiling this Christmas because with your help we also want to give a brand-new pair of shoes to children who have never had them.

Tammy: You can see all of the little ones, honestly, the smiles on their faces, it's so exciting to be a part of it. You can look around at all of the children in this village and most of them are without shoes. They can lose their very lives because of an infection that they could get on their feet.

Announcer: Help make this Christmas special for a child like this. Help us provide Christmas shoes and smiles.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I wish we could just give you a series of those little pre and then post surgical procedure just to show you how you can brighten a child's countenance and their face and their family. I don't think there's a single one of you, I know with Betty and me, when we look and we see what we have seen up close and personal so many times, you can't see that and not want to assist, alleviate the pain. I think that's really the heart of people. I think we just have to do it appropriately.

One of the things I say over and over is you really assist the suffering affectively only if there's a compassion connection. You can't just take and distribute like you're throwing money at an unhittable target. It just doesn't work. It depletes everything and it's ineffective.

Love never fails. Compassion is effective. It's expressing the love of God in action.

Betty, I'm believing that our viewers, right now today and we're coming to the end of this emphasis, we're going to have enough support to buy the 200,000 pairs of shoes and I hope give scores of surgeries; those \$500 each. I ask our viewers as you know to give \$1,000. I would just simply say today that we're going to give another two surgeries. Are you good with that?

Betty: Absolutely!

James: We'll be giving some more shoes. We've already done that but right now just saying "I want to do it." I just looked at those kids and I said I want to give a couple more kids some smiles like that. I want to correct that situation. It will make the parents happy and everybody and it's love! It's an expression of love. The missionaries are going to tell them where the love source is and the inspiration for love – it's God's love! It's poured out through us.

Betty and I can do something but we can't give the 200,000 pairs of shoes or all the surgeries so you participate. You can go to LifeToday.org and make your gift. Use your bankcard like a check. Always use it that way! Or you can call the number that you see there and use your bankcard or you can text. You have the ability. There are so many amazing things you can do now with an iPhone or iPad; you can actually text. We'll give you the form there that you can fill out; so if you want to give you've got an opportunity.

Father, I pray you place the desire there, "I want to give a smile. I want to give some shoes. I want to express your love. I want to support the mission outreach." And God, give them excitement and zeal for it; in Jesus' name.

Would you right now make that special gift? We want to send you some beautiful little Christmas shoes, some little ornaments that you can put on the tree when you make a gift of \$100 or more. Remember \$36 gives 10 children a pair of shoes, \$144 -- 40 children a pair of shoes.

We're sending the little shoe this year to say thanks for any gift you make. Or we send you the four of the previous years plus this year's if you make a gift of \$100. We're going to be giving to all these precious little children, some of them tiny little shoes, adjustable shoes for all of them and that's going to be a tremendous gift for Christmas. We need your help now. So make

that gift and we're going to send an expression of thanks to you. Thank you for doing it. Thank you for making that call, making that gift.

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.

With your gift of any amount be sure to request this beautifully crafted green antique shoe ornament, a treasure to place on your tree each holiday season. With your gift of \$100 or more you may also request a special boxed set of *LIFE*'s Christmas shoe ornaments from past years.

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 our beautifully framed canvas print of "The Forest Chapel."

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I know those scenes of need and expressions of love and what a surgery can do for a child and their family, and putting shoes on a child's feet, just giving them something that they didn't expect. You know when we came into your time frame today and began talking to you it was prayerfully and hopefully asking God to brighten your day and lighten your load. I've said this very consistently on *LIFE Today* for many years, you want your day brightened? Seek to brighten someone else's. You want your prayers answered? Be an answer to someone else's prayers. Watch what happens.

So I have an idea that today you sense God reaching out to you. I think that you felt that James and Betty, and our prayer team and our staff, that we care about you -- and we do very sincerely. I'm telling you this, if you want to be blessed, bless someone else and watch what happens. Would you like to help us give some shoes? \$36, 10 little children get a pair of shoes;

\$144 and 40 children; \$1,000 and two surgeries, and some of you may be able to do more than that. You'll have the little Christmas ornament and decoration; I promise you, people come in your home and they'll notice. You can tell them, "We're trying to give shoes and smiles. We're blessing others because it's such a blessing to do it."

Betty and I want to say thank you for letting us come and share this time with you. We want to thank you for going online LifeToday.org or going to the phone right now. Please, take your bankcard, use it like a check, but make a real prayerful love gift today and say, "I'm going to brighten someone else's day. I've been left here by divine assignment. I'm on a mission. I am blessed and I will bless others freely and just let that river flow. Thanks for doing that. Make that call right now and that special gift."

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I hope you'll make that special gift of \$100 or more if you can and let us send you all five of the little Christmas shoes. You'll know how many people you're blessing with the love of God.

Betty, I'm so glad we got to share with our viewers.

We want to say to all of you, thank you. Thank you for sharing the father's love and the life of Jesus. Thank you for giving us some shoes and smiles. I hope you'll do all you can.

Pray for us as we seek to follow him and bless others. And encourage your friends to watch *LIFE Today*. Check out the *stream* every day. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God -- *stream.org*. You'll be blessed. Thanks for watching.