

**9/17/15**  
**Week 38: Christmas Shoes and Smiles**  
**James and Betty Robison**  
**Fruits of the Spirit #2**

**In the studio**

**James:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm James Robison. Betty and I are so thrilled to be able to come into your home. We have been on a wonderful journey. We've been married now going on 53 years. I've been preaching for well over 50 years now and we've witnessed a lot.

I honestly believe that what we've experienced in this journey, and what we continue to experience, gives us an ability to perhaps identify with and understand where many of you may be in what you go through or what you feel. You perhaps suffered loss, you've had a heartache, maybe relationships broken, maybe you've lost a loved one. Most of you do know that our youngest daughter went to heaven a couple years ago; and we didn't lose her, we know right where she is. She left behind a great legacy of life; and her children are just great expressions of Jesus -- and her husband.

This year, Betty, you and I went to the funerals of two of our very best friends. Over the years they actually served as board members with the ministry. One of them came on staff and worked 30 years. One of them was saved as a contractor in Gallatin, Tennessee north of Nashville when he built the platform for a preacher to preach on. And he said, "I stayed around out of curiosity to see the show." And he got saved. His name was John Ring. He went to be with the Lord earlier this year. And what a tremendous celebration it was at his service; and listening to his youngest son talking about Jesus, who had lost his brother who just died in his sleep a year or so before.

And then, Betty, the man that became a friend to me, Pete Claytor. I want you to listen to this. This is not something that is going to be like a tear-jerker to tear you up. This will encourage you. The man I'm referring to named Pete Claytor picked me up at the airport when I was in my early 20s, 24, and he was 44 that week because I went to a birthday party after the church service in Lubbock, Texas. Well, Pete didn't leave my life for the next 40 some odd years. He became like a brother, and then he became like the father I never had. He was 20 years older than I was. We were fishing buddies. I always wanted someone to take me fishing when I was a little boy and I never got to go. Well, Pete and I got to go. Boy, we fished for men. We led a lot of people to Christ. You would love to have Pete in your home.

When Pete was dying, we went to see him. He just came alive. He had dementia so bad sometimes he wouldn't remember you coming. But we had a conversation that was like a resurrection. A couple nights later, as it was obvious that his heart was failing, his oldest daughter, Lynn was in the next room and mom was in there with Pete. All of the sudden she heard her dad talking to mom and mom motioned. I want you to listen. I want you to listen to what somebody heard as the husband and the dad was dying. Listen.

Lynn writes: I wanted to update y'all. Last night was rough. No real sleep until midnight. At 3:45 I heard dad saying something to mom. She motioned for me to come in there. I wish I had recorded it. We noticed that Dad's oxygen was off. He said, "Wasn't that the most beautiful thing you've ever seen? I just saw the tip of it, the edge of it. I don't think I could stand it being more beautiful without my heart just bursting."

Then for the next two hours dad talked about how blessed he's been, and we've been; what a sweet family he has. About a promise is a promise, especially when it is from the Lord. And then he said, "Is next Saturday the big closing? The finale? It's going to be great!"

A little while ago he started singing. It was hard to make it out. Then it became very clear. It was: Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe.

At one point I asked mom if she wanted to lie down. She said, "I wouldn't take anything for this." He's sleeping right now. I'm glad I was with mom. Your visit with dad ministered greatly to him. (Thanking us for coming.)

And on that Saturday, Betty, it was his funeral. What goes on in your heart when you love your friend Jody and know the blessing that they've been? And then you see this?

**Betty:** As you were reading that, of course it brought back the first time we read it. I thought, how precious is God that he let someone see a glimpse of his glory. There is too much evidence that I've heard and I've seen just in my own spirit to know there is an everlasting life with Jesus Christ. And to see that and just to hear a little bit about, I believe God was giving Pete a glimpse of heaven and of his glory and saying, "Son, I'll see you soon." And he did.

It should bring us hope, James. Everything is not hopeless. God is real. God is true. He is faithful if we will only accept him and know him in a personal way. We would never be alone. He says, "I will never leave you or forsake you. I am here." We have felt that in the great loss that we had in our daughter, James.

And I hear so much heartache going on in the world and I think do they know God? Is he in there in the center of their situation? He sure wants to be.

**James:** I'll tell you the thing I want you to hear as Betty and I are sharing is we know where our daughter is, we know where Pete is, I know where John Ring is, (the contractor who built the platform in Tennessee.) They were witnesses for Christ; Betty and I have sought to be. See the heaven that Pete talked about was so real to him. We know it's real. Jesus gave his life to give us heaven not only there but now. See I saw heaven in John and in Pete every day; we see it in Jody and the family.

Because Jesus didn't come to just get us out of hell and into heaven, he came to put heaven in us right here in the midst of darkness and hellishness so that people could see the light of his glory and come to know the love of God that gives us eternal life that doesn't begin when we die. Pete's life didn't begin when he died and went to heaven. He was full of it while he was talking about what he was seeing, he was already living it.

Betty, when I was called to preach, you remember that first week and the following weeks. I memorized scriptures and just quoted them to you. This is one of the first ones that I memorized. This is where God sent me and the way he sent me and it's why I'm here with you right now, more than 50 years later.

I want you to listen to this. I want you to listen to what Paul said. I want to read it out of First Corinthians, chapter two, beginning at verse one:

*And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*

Why, Paul, did you preach that way? God, why did you call me to preach that way?

*I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.*

That is what we have seen as millions of people have come to Christ. They're part of a glorious remnant of witnesses to stand up in this day of ever-increasing darkness and deception, and where so many people are living in defeat, we're to stand up like a mighty army.

I want to point you to what Paul went on to say. He talked about the natural man doesn't understand the things of the spirit because they're spiritually discerned. The way you understand the things of the spirit realm is you are born again of the spirit into a living relationship with a living God -- and it is not religion, it is not ritual. It's not going through traditional practices. It is a relationship with God, knowing him, not religious affiliation -- please get that! Betty and I were both members of churches. I was christened, she was baptized. We didn't know the Lord. We came to know the Lord. We were born again of the spirit. We were transformed.

Now in the next chapter Paul says, and this is where you've heard me deal with this so much. It is very important that you hear this. Paul said, "You are right now arguing about such foolish things." You're talking about I'm of Peter, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas -- all of these men were great men of God and they were choosing men and dividing over which one they were listening to and who their favorite was.

Stop the nonsense! Christ is the answer. We're not supposed to be divided; we're supposed to become one in Christ. Paul said because you're doing this, I can't even talk to you as spiritual. You're just fleshly. Then he went on to say something very, very powerful and I don't want you to miss this because if you get this it's going to revolutionize your life.

These people who come are watering, they're planting, they're sowing, they're laborers in my field.

*1 Corinthians 3:8*

*Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*

Don't pick and choose. They're simply sowing the seed that is to bring forth good fruit that looks like Jesus. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, meekness. The next verse, verse nine:

*For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.*

You are his cultivated field. What's the significance of that? The seed is sown in the soil of a receptive heart and we bring forth the fruit of the spirit -- spiritual fruit, living fruit. We bring forth the life of God.

Now what happens to a cultivated field that's been planted by the farmer, cared for, and is to bring forth good fruit if it is abandoned? What happens to it? It becomes trampled ground and it grows briars. One of the most powerful passages in the Old Testament is Isaiah five. God said, "I planted a vineyard on a fertile hill and I expected it to bring forth good fruit." The master shepherd, the master farmer planted it -- fertile field, expected it to bring forth good fruit but it did not. It brought forth briars and pestilence. And therefore, I remove the hedge and it became vulnerable.

Let me tell you something. Betty, when you and I as cultivated fields have been called to God to receive the truth and let it bring forth fruit, and we turn away from what the farmer, the father, the shepherd is seeking to do, that cultivated field will grow briars and thorns and be painful. I see that in the lives of many church people and Christians; do you?

**Betty:** Absolutely.

**James:** What's causing it?

**Betty:** It's because we don't stay in God's Word and let him nurture us and grow us up. And we don't stay close to him.

**James:** And we begin to pick and choose between others. I'll follow this one and that one; rather than seeing Jesus in this one and coming to Jesus and recognizing its Jesus we're looking for, it is Jesus we exalt. We appreciate those workers and those gifted ones God set in the church but we don't choose someone to follow other than Christ. If they're pointing us to Christ we keep growing.

Now if we turn away from the word -- I want you to watch what happens -- if you turn away from God's Word, you don't abide in it, the hedge of protection comes down and the enemy comes in like a flood. Here we are today in the church in the United States, in Canada, in Europe, and many places where we have known the truth and we have born great fruit. Many today are failing to bear fruit. They're dividing over various issues that are not even biblical concerns. They are being idolatrous even in their following of individuals rather than the truth of God that brings forth the fruitfulness. And we're being defeated and we're seeing the wall, the hedge come down and people are being controlled by the enemy and jerked around and manipulated and held in bondage. And the only answer is to recognize its trampled ground because we're not bearing the fruit, we're not abiding in the Word, we are not receiving the truth continually flowing like a river that sets us free.

And what is the answer? It's not to get condemned or beat down. It is to recognize that although I am to be the fertile field I'm no longer bearing good fruit, I'm being defeated, and I'm

going to return to the watch care of the shepherd. I'm going to have a personal solemn assembly, I'm going to rend my heart, not my garments. I'm going to tell God I want to be fruitful. I want to live free as an overcomer. And I'm asking you to lift the load. I'm asking you to set me free from the bondage that has come and the consequences of poor choices and I turn my life over to you totally. And I'm going to be a light and a witness for you as long as I'm breathing.

That is the call of God right now on the entire church where we can know as our friends that we referenced, I know what's ahead because I know what's within -- and live a fruitful life. That is God's invitation to you right now. To come to the shelter and the shadow of the almighty and allow him to fill you to overflowing with his spirit so that you produce the fruit of the spirit -- of love and joy and peace, of confidence, a security that is not dependent upon what some man says but upon God. And say, "God, use us, use me as an expression of your life in this dark day."

Right where you are just say, "God, you left me here born of the spirit to be a cultivated field, totally overflowing with the fruit of the spirit, releasing your life and your love and I'll settle for no less." Father, I pray for every person right now who is listening that they may see we're here not by mistake but by divine assignment. And no matter what's going on around us, you are able to enable us to be a bright light, an effective witness and an expression of your life freely to others. Forgive, cleanse, and set free every person who yields to you right now, clay in the Father's hand; in Jesus' name.

Would you say to God, "Take my life -- bring forth good fruit. I yield myself to you totally." If you'd like someone to pray with you, don't hesitate to call and say, "Would you just agree with me that I will become a fruitful field, a well-watered garden, and I'll be an expression of the life of God?" I really believe that's why you're watching today.

Betty, one of the things that I think I found as great an encouragement from, as even Pete or John and the others we talked about, are the viewers of our program. We have taken the viewers of *LIFE Today* for the last 25 years around the world and we have shown you glimpses of pain and suffering and loss and need. And what have our viewers done for the glory of God and the benefit of others?

**Betty:** They have so well responded, James because they love to fill those needs that we have shown you. You give the water, you give the food, and now you have an opportunity to give the shoes and give the smiles. It just continues because that's God's blessing through us to others that are needy and have these needs that we can reach. We can fill these needs.

**James:** Betty is referring to, of course, the drilling of the water wells, and also the food, and all the things we do. But giving these shoes right here, we call it "Christmas Shoes and Smiles." The smiles are the cleft palate surgeries. We've seen so many children over the years as we've traveled that have terrible deformities. We see their little faces where they can't smile. Some of them can hardly keep food in their mouth. You just give them a surgery that brightens everything in their life and their family's. You can imagine what that means.

And we want to send you the little Christmas ornaments that are little shoes. We're asking you to make a special gift and know what it's going to mean as we put shoes on 200,000 children's feet. We need to raise the money right now. We really need to hear from all of you. Just help us -- \$36 will give 10 children a pair of shoes. And some of you can do more than that. The surgeries are \$500. Some of you could give \$1,000 and give a couple of kids a smile for Christmas.

But I want you to just watch this and see if God doesn't speak to you. Would you do that? Watch closely and prayerfully.

### **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](http://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:** Well, Betty and I say thank you for your help. By the way, call until you get through. If you get a busy, don't stop calling. Or you can go to [LifeToday.org](http://LifeToday.org). I want to read this passage to you. I'd like you to mark it in your Bible. Philippians 2, begin at verse 2:

*Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

I think, Betty, that's what our viewers do. You really look out for the interests of others so thank you for giving 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](http://stream.org). You'll be blessed. Thanks for watching.