

10/14/16
Week 42: Shoe and Smiles
James and Betty Robison
Michael Jr.

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

James: I tell you, in troubled times it is kind of nice if every now and then somebody would just really put a smile on your face and make you laugh because laughter is in fact good medicine. Y'all will laugh. Medical doctors will tell you, and scientists know it's healthy to laugh several times a day. Get a bunch of good old laughs in. Can you do that? Well, I think you can.

Would you welcome Michael Jr. to *LIFE Today*? Michael Jr.!

Michael: Thank you very much. I'm excited to be here. This is so cool. I'm glad you're behind me all the way. I really appreciate that man!

So I'll tell you about me. I've got kids -- I've got a bunch of kids and I think working with kids is extremely important. I think all kids should play some sort of sports. Because my favorite saying is "If you buy a man a fish he will eat for a day, but if he teach him how to fish then you've got to buy him a fishing pole, some bait, some tackle, drive them back and forth to the lake." Just get that dude a fish sandwich. That's probably the best thing to do.

[Laughter]

So my kids, I have five of them. True, I got five kids and I travel a lot so I can see them all.

[Laughter]

It's comedy, Christians!

[Laughter]

I was just playing. I don't see them. I was just playing. No, I do. I have five kids, and it's really cool whenever you've got a big family, you want to figure out ways to save money. When we wanted to get our family pictures taken, stuff was expensive so what we did to save money is we all got in the front seat of the car, looked both ways and ran a red light. That's what we did.

[Laughter]

Two weeks later, the picture came in the mail but my son blinked so we had to do it again.

[Laughter]

So I go to different churches. I travel and I go to all these different churches and I'm noticing that some of the churches still do stuff like from back in the day. You ever go to a church where they won't let you in while people are praying? They're like, "You can't go in right now they're praying."

[Laughter]

I'm like, "You think God is going to lose focus?" Do you think God is up there like, "They keep moving, I can't hear what they're saying."

[Laughter]

I'm actually on a prayer team in my church and this dude came up to pray. Like I'm on the prayer team which is I'm not doing it for material... That's wrong!

Anyway, this guy comes up to pray and I was like, "What do you want to pray about?"

He said something I've never heard before. He said, "Unspoken."

We just supposed to stare at each other or something? I don't know what we're supposed to do.

So I was like, "Okay. Dear God, I ask you forgive this man for this unspeakable thing he's done, Lord. I hope it is not contagious, Lord."

[Laughter]

And I like sports too because that's the next subject I have a joke about. So sports are cool. I've got some friends who play major league baseball. Any baseball fans in here?

[Applause]

Really? -- That's a really high percentage. Anyway, so they play major league baseball and they told me, "You should come to a game."

I've never been to a game before. So I was like, "All right. Cool." I'm going to go to this game.

I'm sitting behind home plate. The first thing I notice is everyone there seems to be a little tipsy. Let me express what I'm talking about. They had a lot of communion.

[Laughter]

You're a Christian audience, I should help you out.

Anyway, so they seemed a little tipsy but I'm not really sure. Then we get to the 7th inning and everybody starts singing a song. What's the song? "Take me out to the ball game."

I'm like, "We are already at the ball game! You don't even know where you are right now?"

Some people say baseball players are athletes, some people say they're not. I don't know, I'm just watching the game, and this dude gets up to bat. This... this... this swollen dude.

[Laughter]

He gets up to bat and they pitch him the ball and he hits it; it is like a base hit. The dude takes off running as fast as he can but he's really not that fast. They actually went to a commercial break and came back, he was just getting to first base.

[Laughter]

When he got to first base, he was done. [Breathing heavy] And he did something that I never seen in all of sports before. He went like this. Anybody know what happened? Another human showed up, took his spot and started being an athlete for him. That dude went and sat down and had some KOOL-AID and some beef jerky.

I'm like, "Are you an athlete or a half-lete? What just happened, dude?" I'm amazed at the fact that like this dude is not doing anything at all. So I don't really watch a whole lot of baseball.

I think having, just in general, having a pinch runner because that's what they call them, would be pretty dope. I'm sorry, wrong audience. It would be efficient. Because if you have a pinch runner in life, your wife asks you one of those complex questions.

She's like, "Hey, does this dress make me look big?"

"Um, hey, bring it in, dog, bring it in."

[Laughter]

"She got one of those questions for you."

I think working out is important. I was at the gym the other month.

[Laughter]

I was going to do some cardio but they moved it upstairs. Well, I ain't going up there, man!

[Laughter]

Was that your laugh, James? Wow, James! Scared me a little bit. I didn't know what that was.

[Laughter]

So I was going to do cardio but then I got recognized at the gym. She was like, "Uh!"

I was like, "I'm just trying to work out."

She was like, "You don't understand, Michael Jr. You're my favorite comedian. Every time I see you I laugh my butt off."

I said, "Uh... keep laughing!"

[Laughter]

So even if anyone here has ever coached here before, if you ever played any sports you've heard this phrase before or you've said this phrase if you're a coach. Where you look at your team and you say, "Listen. The stuff I'm teaching you here is not just about this game, you're going to apply it to life!" Have you ever heard that before?

Here's the thing. It's not true. Let me explain.

Straight out of high school I got a job parking cars. One of the cars was really nice so I took it for a little spin. The company found out and my boss lost the account. He was yelling at me and screaming.

I didn't know what to say or do. I thought back to my high school football coach. I looked at my boss and I said, "You know what man? You win some you lose some, man! You can't let this one loss get you down! The important thing is I went out there and I had fun."

[Laughter]

And this has been fun too. Thanks a lot. I'm going to sit next to the Robisons!

James: That's all right, buddy! Michael Jr., I ask you, when I saw you, "When are you going to be Michael, Sr.?"

Michael: I think it's like when I'm 65 or something; right?

James: Could be.

Michael: Probably so.

James: A long way to go. How many kids have you got?

Michael: Five kids. I love being a dad. It's like the best -- being a dad is like the best.

James: Is it?

Michael: Well, apparently not!

[Laughter]

James: I thought maybe you were going to tell me something interesting.

[Laughter]

Or maybe something funny -- and sure enough you did!

This is a CD... Yeah, I'm sharp, one of those sharper guys. But you've got a lot of little vignettes, I guess. Is it all one show? Or is it the best of a bunch of shows?

Michael: So what it is, it's a CD and normally, a comedian, like myself, I have CD's out that is my standup comedy. But I have this ability to just impromptu talk to the audience and funny just kind of happens. So what we've done is we've taken a collection of all of those interactions with audience members, those really funny, funny things...

James: When you're talking to somebody like you did me, "Apparently not."

[Laughter]

Michael: I'm going to do the jokes!

[Laughter]

So we made a whole CD of just those funny interactions. Like we met a couple, the lady was 84 and the guy was 86 and they had just started dating. So they happened to be in my audience and I talked to them. And what happens is just completely hysterical.

So we actually, that's the CD, it's called "Michael Jr. Break Time" because normally, when I'm doing standup comedy in the middle of my show, if you ever come see one of my full events, I stop in the middle of my show and I take a break and I talk to the audience members. Well, we record it, and we made a CD to the best of them --

James: And is there a break in here too?

Michael: The whole thing is break time. It is an extended version -- it's break times from different shows I've done all over the country.

James: You've got something else that I think perhaps you want to talk about: No Show Comedy Event.

Michael: Where did you get that? Is that a bootleg?

[Laughter]

Here's the thing, this isn't even out yet. So you got...

Like for real, James has got some pull because this thing, it's not even out yet.

But I'm really, really excited about that. So what this is we met a family that had five kids and they adopted two and they were fostering five siblings. Then the five siblings, someone came along and they were going to adopt two of the five, which would sound great but that means the family would get split up. So this family that doesn't make much money decided to step up and adopt these five kids. So now you have all these kids, and then shortly after their vehicle got stolen.

This is where we found out about it. So I was like their vehicle got stolen and I felt like God wanted me to do something. But he didn't say buy them a vehicle, he just said... so I meet with my family and we pray and what we decide to do is we do a comedy show fundraiser for this family. But the thing about doing a fundraiser is if I do a comedy show for people and they pay money for a ticket to come see the comedy show and they see a comedy show, they're getting what they're paying for. They haven't really helped by any means.

So what we decided to do, because technically that would be me buying a family a vehicle with the proceeds. So what I decided to do, we prayed and was like, we're going to do a show, and we called it the "No Show Comedy Show." So people bought tickets to a show that they knew would never happen. And we raised the money, got the money for this family and the family doesn't even know we're doing this. So we show up at their house and they think we're going to show them a video fundraiser of them and what they actually see is me outside their house introducing them to their vehicle. And you get to see their reaction and it's pretty powerful.

So the story was so strong and so powerful we actually made a curriculum out of it. So you can do it as a small group -- so it teaches the principles of giving and receiving but you can do it as a small group or you can do it as an individual and just watch it and just receive and learn a lot. It should be released within this week, so if you go to Michael Jr. -- anywhere! You can actually get it here. You can get it here. You're going to throw in a pair of shoes for free or something too; aren't you?

[Laughter]

Give them some shoes. So I'm really, really excited about that project. Just some really cool stuff is going on.

James: Is that the major emphasis on your heart right now is to try to get people focused in on meeting needs that just go easily overlooked?

Michael: Yeah! I think the greatest gift you can give someone is give them the opportunity to give because what happens is it changes a heart.

For me, for instance, my comedy was all about getting laughs from people. Then when God told me instead of trying to get laughs from people, "I want you to give them an opportunity to laugh." That right there has changed everything about everything that I do. So now even at my events or even during a break time I'll talk to someone. Like last week there was a mechanic in the audience. I said, "What do you do?"

He said, "I'm a mechanic."

I said, "What does that mean?"

He said, "It means I get paid to fix people's cars."

So we talked for a little longer and then he understood that what he actually does -- and this was a revelation for him -- is he helps insure that people reach their desired destination. That right there will put your alarm clock out of business. The other one will cause you to hit the snooze.

So if we can just understand that everything we do, any job you have, you're going to be serving people anyways. So if you could just shift on serving them as opposed to just trying to be served from them. Technically, take the napkin from here and fold it up and put it here, it will change everything and make you a happier person as a result of it.

So I intertwine that with the comedy and the jokes.

James: And I really do believe that. I feel like God has gifted you with a wonderful communication style and humor but I've watched you take all the humor and all the laughter and immediately take someone where you want them to go. But the thing that I saw in those people was somebody noticed, somebody loved us, somebody cared. And I think that's an eternal effect on those people, not just right here. I think it changes them forever.

Michael: If we can just stop asking the question, "What can I get for myself?" And start asking the question, "What can I give from myself?" it would change the game. It really would.

James: We've got viewers all over the world, Michael. Did you want to ask Michael something?

Betty: I was just sitting here listening to you. Really it's a gift...

Michael: How did you get Betty exactly? How did that happen?

[Laughter]

James: Well, you know you were talking about miracles. This is it! It was just this. It really is. I enjoyed shopping while I was looking. I was shopping.

Michael: So she got the short end of the stick? Is that what happened?

James: No doubt she did!

Betty: Now I forgot what I was going to say. No, I see in the gift that God's given you to allow people to laugh through what you do, but at the same time your goal, it seems like is to take them somewhere, and maybe even by interacting with your audience, which I think is wonderful. That's not an easy thing to do, but to bring it back home to where they go away not only having had laughter, which is good for us, but with a purpose maybe of what God wants them to do with their lives.

Michael: You summed it up perfect. Y'all should switch seats!

[Laughter]

That's amazing. Absolutely! Because if I just get a million people to laugh, it's just a million people laughing. And a lot of comedians say, and it's not their fault, they just don't know, "If I can just get people in the room to forget their problems for a little while."

Forget their problems? No. But afterwards they still got some problems. So I want to take them, I want to catch them with the comedy and keep them with the truth. I want to take them somewhere better than just a temporary solution.

James: I think he does it. Do you think he does it?

[Cheers & Applause]

I think Michael is one of the most gifted people I know and I think he is a gift to us, all of us, not just Christians but all of us here on this planet -- the human race.

And this is something, if somebody wanted to go and know all about what you're talking about here and be able to get this or however you present it, where do they go? Is there a web site they can learn about what's going on?

Michael: They can go to MichaelJr.com or if you want to make it available to them, you can do that as well. Because apparently you got that one.

[Laughter]

So do that.

James: Okay. I will offer this to anyone who will give some shoes to kids. You got a problem with that?

Michael: What am I going to say at this point?

[Laughter]

No! That sounds awesome! That's really cool.

James: You know from the time you walked in with me and Betty tonight talking, I feel like you knew that we had an interest in you and your future; right? Did you feel that?

Michael: I felt that from the gate, from the Christmas party when we first met.

James: That was years ago.

Michael: Yeah.

James: Well, it's never changed. But see, I look out at all the people that nobody noticed and they think nobody cares. Then I say to all the people sitting here, there are people everywhere like that let's help them. I like what Joel Osteen's father said to me that really blessed me. Before he died, he's been gone now for...

Michael: He said it before he died?

[Laughter]

James: You know what miraculous things -- John Osteen and I've been talking. But John calls us after watching what some of you'll see in a few minutes and he said, "James, I want to thank you. I'm a mission-minded pastor. You and Betty have brought the mission fields of the world into our homes. We've been able to see what God does through the love of missionaries as it

flows through them freely. And you've enabled us to see the importance of keeping them on the field and what that love does." And he said, "Thank you."

I think really and truly we're seeing that mission outreach in his son Joel, because it's kind of a miracle the way Joel has comforted people that need comfort and hope. So what you're doing is great. The web site is Michael...

Michael: MichaelJR.com.

James: I want you to check that out.

Michael, we are right now, we're going to ask people all over the world to help us give Shoes and Smiles. The surgery we do for cleft palate is a beautiful thing. Would you just right now please and I know we've laughed and we've had a good time and we should, but you know what can put smiles on people's faces? When you take a little twisted face, a little cleft palate child and you give them a smile, what a blessing it is.

And then when you put shoes on little feet that they in many instances never had them and they get bacteria, infection, disease, even hookworms that not only damages their health but can destroy their lives, their little minds.

Would you just look in right now and pray, I pray you look through the eyes of Jesus and then just respond the way you think he would want you to. You look. I think you're going to be moved to be an expression of his love, God's love. Watch.

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: Wow! Betty, what goes on in your heart when you watch these pictures?

Betty: I love this time of the year when we're able to give the shoes to the children. And you see them; they jump up and down. They dance around. They have something on their feet! They're used to going barefooted and getting cuts and scrapes and then sometimes it leads to awful diseases. I'd love being a part of being able to put shoes on those precious little feet of those children that God loves so much. And then to be able to give smiles to the little children that haven't been able to smile. There's nothing like looking at a little child, and a baby.

We have a great grandson and I love his smile! It just lights up my day. So what an opportunity to be able to put some smiles on little faces that have never been able to smile and to put shoes on feet that can help them prevent the disease that comes their way from not having shoes. So join with us.

James: I hope you won't turn away for even a second. I know you enjoy watching *LIFE Today*. A lot of times I think people get the inspiration, and maybe the instruction or insight, or maybe like sometimes just get joy and laughter and praise God for what you hear. But then when you see something that really requires, you might say, a response, an appropriate response, a response that is motivated by love, compassion, concern.

Betty talked about what happens to these children when they get shoes. Of course, when you take a little face that is so distorted and figured and you put a beautiful smile on it, think about what it does for the mother, for the dad, for the family, for the child. Would you look at that as though it was a situation right in your own immediate setting? What would it mean to you for love to step in and be the miracle that your heart longed for? Or perhaps the protection for children to be able to enjoy life and to be able to play, like Betty said without worrying about getting disease or bacteria in their little feet.

Would you right now help us put on the feet of 150,000 children little shoes like this? These tiny little shoes on beautiful little feet? It's a great expression of love, and we'd like to do that for Christmas. That's why we say "Christmas Shoes and Smiles." We want to do the cleft palate surgeries.

Let me tell you what it takes. \$36 will give 10 children a pair of shoes. Could you do that? \$72 will give 20. We're asking many of you this year to consider giving 50 children pairs of shoes and we want to send you the gifts that we send for any gift, each year for six years now, we've been giving these little Christmas shoes for Christmas ornaments on your tree.

This year, if you'll help us give 50 children a pair of shoes we're going to send you this beautiful Christmas box. It comes like this. It is like a gift to you and you open it and there are all the shoes from the time we began doing this. Remember, any time we see a need we can only meet the need if you're the divine enabler. You, led by God enable us to do it.

Would you give 50 children shoes? Would you give 10? Would you give a cleft palate surgery? That's \$500. Or maybe two?

We have some gifts to send you to say thank you. And from the bottom of our heart thank you for your sensitivity. If you want to help, go to LifeToday.org, use your bankcard and right there online you can make your gift. If you want to call, dial the number that's there. People dial that number every time they need someone to pray with them. There will be more people calling today for prayer than to be an answer to prayer because there are tremendous needs. But if you can be an answer to prayer, give the shoes, give the smiles, whatever you can do, you call, take your bankcard and make the gift God put on your heart. Thank you so much for doing it!

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 150,000 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 \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

With your gift of any amount be sure to request this beautifully crafted blue metal shoe ornament, a treasure to place on your tree each holiday season. With your gift of \$180 or more you may also request this keepsake boxed set of *LIFE*'s Christmas shoe ornaments.

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 "Majesty" bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I say thank you. I thought you looked so beautiful awhile ago. I was watching on the monitor. God really did bless me. You know, Michael asked me how in the world did I get you? It's a miracle! She got the short end of the stick. There's no question about that. But I tell you what, the joy that God has allowed us to have together; and here's the beautiful thing. We have a relationship that has been such a joy to us with any challenges, and we've seen them, all of us do. But the fact that we've been able to share joy is our greatest joy, giving life.

Well, Michael Jr. is here. He's told you about this "No Show Comedy" that he says we miraculously got a jump start on. And he said you can have this if you will...

I said, "Let's give some Shoes and Smiles."

But he also has this little comedy deal that we talked about up front. I want to say to you, and I'm doing this on my own here, you may have either one that you'd like to have. You say, "I want that little break time. I want to hear that interaction." "I want to see this vision and all this over here and I want to see that family you were talking about." Either one -- either one if you say I'll give some shoes, ask for them. So both of them, they can see them both, but they've got a choice.

You're not going to make the choice for everybody. You understand that? You get my drift?

Michael: Yeah, absolutely. Yes, sir!

[Laughter]

James: Would you say thanks to Michael Jr. for being with us?

Thank all of you for watching. Thank you for being here. Thank you.

Shoes and Smiles for Christmas! Okay?