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Week 44: Shoes and Smiles

James and Betty Robison

Your freedom, your future: Racial division #2

E.W. Jackson, Ravi Zacharias, Jack Graham

James: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. Betty and I consider it an honor to share this time with you. We've been bringing together and presenting to you over the last few days the heartfelt concern, and I believe the love of God, expressed through some of the most respected church leaders in America. Many of them lead the largest Christian denominations. They truly have a shepherd's heart. But these people with diverse backgrounds, distinctive differences in some areas, however, have come together in supernatural unity; the kind of unity that it's going to take to see our nation healed.

You're going to be blessed as you listen. You're going to be praying and you're going to participate prayerfully in making the wisest choices possible based on biblical principles, unshakable, foundational truth. Be blessed.

Begin video clip

E.W: Something that we don't talk about enough and I know Bishop Jackson, you know it is true; there is a deep, a profound spirit of unforgiveness in the black community over slavery and Jim Crow. It is as if it just ended yesterday in the minds of many. The moment you start talking about race it comes up. We can't seem to get past it and many of us are not preaching forgiveness and reconciliation.

What I try to do and what Bishop Harry Jackson just said is absolutely true but you can't even get there if people think, what are you all up to? And the man's out to get me. There is no trust, there is no basis for communication. What I say to people is you've got to put America in the context. This is the analogy I've used. Every time a black guy commits some crime one of the first things we talk about is wow, look at the poverty. Look at the lack of a father in the home. And we try to put in context his behavior.

But we don't ever try to put in context what happened in America. We don't try to put in context and say, "Well, what was the nature of the age? What was George Washington raised like?" "They were slave owners!"

And we don't ask, "Well, wait a minute. If from a child you're taught this is the way of the world. This is the way God intended..." we ought to be amazed that some of them were able to say, "Wait a minute, something is wrong with this."

So we don't try to put this in context and the church is where that ought to happen so that we can begin to look at one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and help lead our country past this stuff as opposed to continuing to wallow in it.

When you add, James, I'll stop here, but when you add a young man growing up in a home without a father, and I lived in a foster home for the first ten years of my life and I tell people, I've been on both sides of it. I was bitter, I was angry, my attitude was, my father is not here to tell me what to do, you're not telling me what to do.

You add to that somebody speaking into their ear, "White people have done... they held us in slavery. Look at Jim Crow." And then you spin a myth that police are out hunting down black men, killing them intentionally and then being paid to go home and relax for a few weeks. You've got a formula where it becomes very, very difficult to even get to the economic political policy issues that we can begin to address with people.

So please pray for forgiveness in the black community to take root.

James: And I do. Let me say this, Bishop. Because I recognize the need in the urban community and I see what my friend Tony Evans is doing with the Urban Alternative, and his desire to give fathers in that area as mentors and how effective it is. But I also know many entrepreneurs in the area of success who want to be in the inner city urban community with businesses but here is their response. If your response to wrongdoing is you're going to burn down the businesses that are there, who wants to bring a business in? And then if you have got to have law enforcement and you've got to build a relationship of appreciation for them and its lacking and you know you can't secure anything without sound law enforcement and you keep stirring the tension, how do you ever expect us to bring business opportunity in when there is no security for anybody?

And how do the kids feel good going to school when you're afraid for them to even get out in a public way? There's got to be good law enforcement. Right now I feel like I hear the people crying out for it but I don't hear enough African American or black leaders saying, "Let's honor law enforcement." We've got some who have not done it right, it's obvious.

Harry Jackson you pointed out the fact that justice is not equal. You and I have been working together now for many months and even years, and been working with T.D. Jakes and others to say let's do something about the unequal justice system. But we've got to do it with

inspirational leadership within the community and we've got to start building relationships between the necessary parts.

You can't have lawlessness -- you will have it if you don't have law enforcement that's respected. So we've got to build this relationship. I think the stage is set not for more riots, except for that, but for an opportunity to come together and deal with the problem effectively. That's what I see the opportunity as presented to all of us today if we can just get the leaders to stand up and inspire.

Would you agree Bishop Jackson?

Harry: Well, I would agree. We've got to have all people speak out. We've got a lot more multiracial congregations; many of the folks here have them. But we also have to have black and Hispanic leaders run the risk of being rejected by sharing truth as we see it and challenge people to a kingdom mindset.

Paul talked about in Ephesians the fact that we're kind of hardwired by the culture to follow the course of the world. We've got to have our minds renewed, and we've got to put off the old man, put on the new.

So yes, we've got to have speakers and leaders but there is a lot to risk. The things that you risk if you stand up, if you've got a great TV ministry, you sell products, you've got a large number of people in the liberal centers of the country who won't buy your stuff, who won't go to your church, who won't pay their tithe and they'll act out.

So I think we're going to have to do this together. Believe it or not, James, your working with Bishop Jakes and I and others in big meetings has lent more credibility to what we do than just a bunch of whining black people standing up saying, "They've done us wrong again!"

So we kind of got to be in this thing together. If we are working together, and then yes, some of us being brave and courageous, I know Sammy can tell you he doesn't broadcast this but some of the things that he says gets him nice little love notes.

[Laughter]

-- And threats to rearrange certain body parts. That kind of courage is needed and shouldn't be minimized.

Ravi: I'll tell you in the last ten years I've noticed every campus setting, whether it is Harvard or Princeton or Yale or Oxford or Cambridge, wherever, University of Jakarta, we were told

there would be 300 students for the open forum on a comparison between Christ and Mohammed there were over 3,000; University of Kentucky, on a weeknight, 7,000.

Why am I saying this? -- To talk about the church getting into the political life. We've got to prepare them. There's absolutely no doubt we're not going to make it otherwise. The University of Uppsala in Sweden has on the door these words: "To think freely is great, to think rightly is greater." "To think freely is great, to think rightly is greater."

We took a survey on the students before we went there and it was a packed house; more than 50% of them disagreed with their own motto. They would rather think freely than think rightly. So on the opening night I stood up and said, "I do have a question for you. In rather being free than right do you think you are right?" And it was just sort of a pause and then a wave of laughter went over. What I think they were really saying is, they're apathetic. They really are indifferent to these things.

To you, as brothers and sisters in Christ, especially to the Hispanic community, the African American community, the Asian community, we've got to reach our young to become faculty members and educators. What we've seen in the last few years is the relativistic ideology of Ivy League schools and professorial lecterns just being spread around as an absolute. We will never change this landscape if we don't get the right thinking people in positions that affects student bodies.

What I've learned is no matter how much they fight you before you come it was I think at U Penn, or Carnegie Mellon, one of the two, but they were trying to stop our coming and all that does is build a bigger audience. So the place was packed. And at the end of it the Vice President of the Humanistic Association walked up to the microphone and he said, "I want to thank you for coming." He apologized for everything that preceded because I began by telling them, "I'm not here to change your mind on anything, but I am here to tell you there is somebody who can change your mind. And I want to talk to you about those issues and can we interact on it?"

We have to get the church into the academic setting because from there we develop our political leadership and our cultural ethos has developed. So think young; think of the young, even the 13, 14, 15 year olds who are really asking good questions. Once they respect that there's a connection between your head and your heart they will listen more carefully and they get into the arena to change the world.

Francis Schaeffer said it in the 1980s. He said, "We're losing! We're losing the academy and if we don't get back into the academy we're going to lose the culture." I think that time has come. We have to get back into the academy to prepare our young to do electorships out there.

Jack Graham: We learn a lot by listening and listening today, I'm hearing everyone who has spoken. Basically, it all rides on relationships; when we get together, when we actually talk to each other instead of talking about each other, lives get changed and churches get changed and the country gets changed.

But I was thinking as you were talking about the justice issues and the racial issues, I guess I grew up with every opportunity to be a racist because I grew up in a little town, segregated south, I was a child in the '50s, 30 miles north of Little Rock, which was grand zero in the late 1950s with Governor Faubus and closing the school and the integration issue, segregation.

So that was my family. Now my family was not a racist family but we certainly had our prejudices and biases. I never went to school with a person other than a white person until I went to college; that sounds like I'm a dinosaur from that era but it is true. Many of us, we did not grow up knowing each other. Our churches were segregated. Life was segregated. So because of that, because we didn't know each other we didn't share the gospel with each other, we didn't serve one another and our whole lives were siloed.

When I was a little boy there was a television program with Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. We rolled out the 1954 Philco television and it was early primitive television. There was a dark screen and a hand and a match and a light and a candle lit. And the voice over, it was a rather creepy kind of voice over, "Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." And as a little guy that got into my heart. "Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." I later learned that that's in the Bible, not per se but when Paul said, "Overcome evil with good."

So later on when I was called to preach and became a preacher at a young age that was in my heart. But in 1970, as a college student I was actually preaching a student revival, I got word that my father had been severely injured in Fort Worth, Texas. And he had been bludgeoned with a hammer and he was in an intensive care unit at the hospital. We drove down. It's a long story. But we got there and he died 10 days later, never recovering from those wounds. It happened to be a black man that beat my father to death.

Now I had a choice at that point. I could blame a race, a people. I could become bitter and angry for the rest of my days. Or rather than curse the darkness, I could light a light. I remember going down that night to the little chapel in the hospital. Thank God for those little chapels that people can pray, I've been there. I just laid out before the Lord; no one was there. I can't tell you exactly what happened in that room but I know the presence of God, his hand was upon this young preacher. And rather than shaking my face in hatred and anger towards anybody anyone God spoke to me and said, "Spend the rest of your days preaching the gospel, turning on the light, and trying to help people who have so much hatred in their heart, whatever

their race, but try to help people who have so much hatred in their heart that they would actually beat another man to death."

My father was my hero and I'll never forget it. I mean I tremble to think about it and talk about it today but God did something in my life that day, to this little white boy from the south that changed my perspective on everything. And I know this, the gospel is the gospel of reconciliation. And there is no room, if your heart is headquarters for hate, you're not even a Christian.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I know you've been blessed. Father, I just want to thank you for these men and women that came here with such a deep heartfelt concern for our future, for our freedom, for the blessings that we've not only enjoyed but we've been able to share. Lord, help us make wise decisions, please heal our land; in Jesus' name.

I sure do love you. We're praying for you and with you. I honestly believe this is one of the most important elections I know in the 73 years that I've been on this earth and from the very early '60s when I first, along with Betty began to vote -- and I've seen some very important ones -- I think as far as the future of freedom, starting with religious freedom with the family, with financial stability and security, I think this is the most important and nobody can opt out. I know you won't.

You know when we show our viewers a need that love can address effectively, can actually be the miracle answer to, you respond. Listen. We can get a miracle answer to the prayers in behalf of our country and our future because when the fervent prayers of righteous people go forth God hears. I don't believe there are any people any more righteous than those who are loving God and loving their neighbor. And what we do here on *LIFE Today* together, you, I'm talking about, you have a love for God and you love your neighbor so much that you reach out and say, "I'm going to bless them."

Right now, we're about to give some gifts for Christmas because of the greatest gift, Jesus. We're going to give some shoes that you can put on precious feet where many of them have never had shoes and they're getting diseases. We're able to give thousands of little children Christmas shoes and Christmas smiles because you choose to do it. You choose to express the love of God.

I want you to watch closely and just see if you don't want to be the one that gives these precious ones the opportunity to rejoice because of love. Watch.

On the mission field

James: We want to give children like these, beautiful children shoes -- children all over the world. There goes another one! We want to give them shoes.

You know what Jesus said? "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not."

You know what? We are the representative of Christ. We are his body, we're his family and we can share his love. We love these little children. We're going to give these little children shoes. Look at these beautiful little feet!

Betty: They have nothing, really but they can still play, they can still have fun. They're children! I think that's what they're supposed to be instead of having to worry about walking around without any shoes where they step on stuff and hurt their feet and also get diseases through that too.

James: Betty, they just tough it out and they play but we found out right here in this area that hookworms get in the skin, maybe where they have a little tear in the skin, get in the bloodstream, ultimately into the intestines and cause very serious disease and sometimes death.

Just look here! This boy has had a blowout in his tennis shoe! He has played so hard and gotten so dirty.

You need to wash your shirt, man!

Isn't it great to see? The kids, they want to have fun. We're going to love them with your help. We're going to give them good new shoes. We -- not me -- all of us together! Let's put shoes on all these beautiful children's beautiful feet! It would just be such a wonderful gift to make at this time and I hope you will do all you can. Just give as many pairs as you can to bless as many children and their families as you can.

End of clip

In the studio

James: How do you like that?

Betty: I love it! I love to see children playing and happy. And that's what children are supposed to do, James. They're going to play. They don't have to have a lot to play. You give them sticks, anything, they can make a game out of it. They want to have fun.

But when they're walking around on all of the stuff that's on the ground that can cut their precious little feet, just bruise their little toes and cause infection that they can't do anything about, I know it would please their mothers if they had some shoes on their feet so she didn't have to worry about their little feet getting cut and disease like so many of them do.

James: I just love watching those kids. I loved watching that little girl dance like she was. That's about how I dance. I can dance with little girl. And in the very first part, you saw me holding a little girl and the little boy ran right in front of me -- there goes another one. The thing I think is wonderful is there's such a love God puts in your heart for these precious little ones. "Suffer the little ones to come unto me, forbid them not of such is the kingdom of God." If you can't love them you have a real problem. I know you do.

But, Betty, that little girl that was sitting in my lap there, I had seen her and she was a sweet little girl, very shy. And I just kind of watched her walking around. I sat down and I saw her in the distance and literally sitting there, I prayed, "God, I wish that little girl would come over here and just let me hold her and love her." And I'm telling you, I prayed her right there into my arms.

You know why that little girl was comfortable? -- Because she was in the arms of love. It is God's love. It's a love I never felt from my own father. I didn't have a father. But I have the Father. And the Father's love fills my heart literally to overflowing. I love you. And why we share wonderful stories and help and testimonies is to show you how great God is in ordinary people with extraordinary ways that he can do anything with any vessel that is yielded. So we not only love these children who are thirsty or hungry or need shoes, we love you, which is why we come.

Well, we also find that one of the greatest things we can do -- and Betty, I know people, I think they realize this -- one of the greatest things we can do is to give you an opportunity to be the hands of Jesus or to do it to the least of these. Jesus said, "If you do it to the least of these who

are overlooked you've done it to me." If you ever wanted to bless Jesus directly just do something for the overlooked. That's what we're doing now. We're going to give Shoes and Smiles for Christmas.

Right now I'm praying that we will have an overwhelming response. I'm praying for a miracle response for cleft palate surgeries. Medical doctors do them for \$500, that's the average; that's a very reduced rate because they have a missionary heart; \$1,000 two surgeries for smiles.

And then we're going to give as many shoes, thousands of them to as many children as we possibly can; \$36, think about that, 10 children shoes for Christmas; \$180, 50 children!

There is some level at which you can participate. There is no gift too small. There may even be some of you who say, "You know what? During this special Thanksgiving season coming up, looking toward Christmas, I can go ahead and give a year-end gift right now." And you may send a very large gift. I promise you, it will be used to share the love of God.

Would you help pay for smiles and shoes? We want to send you some beautiful Christmas decor. The beautiful little Christmas shoes that we have literally created every year and designed for you, now we have six of them. They come like a Christmas tree if you'll make that gift to provide 50 pairs of shoes. The beautiful bronze "Majesty" if you'll help give those smiles. \$1000 gives two.

Would you go to LifeToday.org right now? Would you go online, take your bankcard, prayerfully make the best gift you can? Thank you. If you want to dial the number for prayer or right now to help, to be an answer for help, dial the number, take your bankcard, make the best gift you can. If you write a check make it to LIFE but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. We need to know.

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 want to say thanks. I hope you give us an opportunity to send this beautiful gift, just the box itself, the way this is presented; you talk about a really nice gift to receive. And when you open it up and you see all six of the little shoes as Christmas decor, a lot of people who walk in and see your Christmas decor, they're going to talk about this. And you get to tell them how they can share Shoes and Smiles as a love gift.

Thank you so much for watching. Are you praying about the election? Are you praying for God to give us a miracle awakening? Transforming power? God can change anybody and there are some changes that need to be made that only he can make. Don't opt out. Pray. Participate. Vote! Vote prayerfully!

God bless you and thanks for watching.