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Week 40: Christmas Shoes & Smiles

James and Betty Robison

Dr. Robert Jeffress #1

James: This is a joy! Thank you. We appreciate it. It is great to be with all of you. Thank you for giving us this opportunity. It really is a privilege that you grant us this time with you. Betty and I are welcoming you to *LIFE Today*. We welcome Dr. Robert Jeffress back with us, First Baptist Dallas.

I've got so many memories of that church. I'm 74 and I started preaching there when I was 23. Dr. Jeffress was -- he'll tell you, he was like 12 or so. I was trying to sow good seeds, and evidently he thought I did. But memories of the church, I just want to say to all of you at First Baptist, thanks for praying for this country. Thanks for praying for the church. Thanks for praying for people all over the world and being an example. Thanks for being an encouragement to me and to Betty and to our family.

Dr. Jeffress has written a book and obviously this book, everything he writes is really remarkable. Since Betty and I have one of our children in heaven, *A Place Called Heaven*. You think we don't have an interest in knowing about it? Would you welcome Dr. Jeffress as he shares?

Dr. Jeffress: Thank you! Thank you so much!

James: It's good to have you.

Dr. Jeffress: Great to be with you.

James: Why did you write the book? You seem to write out of conviction and you seem to be literally led to do what you do. Why?

Dr. Jeffress: Two reasons, James and Betty. First of all to encourage people. As this world becomes more and more involved in political chaos and international conflict, heartbreak like you all have suffered, the hope of heaven grows that much more intense for us. So I want this to encourage people that there really is a better place Jesus is preparing for us right now.

But also I write it to inform people. Most Christians are very ignorant about heaven. They only

know what they've seen in movies and TV programs that Hollywood has put out or some fantastical book. So in this book, what I do is I answer ten of the most frequently asked questions about heaven people have asked me over the last 40 years.

I have to say a lot of people say, "Well, aren't you afraid of being so heavenly minded that you'll be no earthly good?" I've never found a Christian who thinks too much about heaven. The problem is we think too little about it. I think there are some really productive reasons that every Christian ought to think about heaven.

First of all, thinking about heaven reminds us of the brevity of our life here on earth. Moses said, "Count your days. Remember how few they are. Number them." So we need to remember how brief our time here on earth is.

Secondly, thinking about heaven prepares us for the judgment we'll face as Christians. A lot of Christians think, well, I'm a Christian. I never face God's judgment. That's not true. We have a different kind of judgment than non-Christians but the Bible says we as Christians will appear before the judgment seat of Christ for an evaluation of our lives. Thinking about heaven reminds us of that.

Third, thinking about heaven motivates us to live a pure life while here on earth. Second Peter three says: *Seeing all these things are going to happen, what sort of people ought we to be in holy conduct in godliness?*

All day today I've been wearing this suit and I was so afraid I was going to get it dirty or get a barbecue stain on it like we had at summer tonight. Or something because I knew those H.D. TV cameras were going to pick up everything that was on this suit.

[Laughter]

Well, I wanted to stay clean for the time of judgment that I was going to come under here tonight. Well, in the same way, know that we're going to stand before the judgment of God in heaven ought to motivate us to live pure lives.

But the final and most important reason, I think we ought to talk about and think about heaven is because it puts our present suffering in perspective when we remember heaven. Paul had an interesting word in Second Corinthians four. He said: *"This light momentary affliction we suffer is nothing compared to the eternal weight of glory that awaits us."*

Did he say light afflictions? Think about Paul. He was beaten three times within an inch of his life. He was shipwrecked. He was stoned. He said, "That's light compared to heaven and the

weight of heaven." And he said it is momentary when you compare it to eternity.

Some of our listeners right now and viewers are probably thinking, my suffering is just endless -- it is endless. It is momentary when you think about the eternality of heaven. Somebody once said from the perspective of heaven, "Once we get to heaven, we'll see that our worse suffering on earth was no more than a one night stay in a bad motel." I think that's exactly what Paul was saying.

So I wrote this book about heaven to encourage people that God really has something better for us.

James: When you think about heaven and I know you cover it in detail, what do you think are some of the greatest joys and surprises maybe somebody is going to have when they get to heaven? What do you think is going to happen?

Dr. Jeffress: I think there are so many surprises. Let's face it. God doesn't tell us everything about heaven. I think if we knew what really awaited us, there would be mass suicides of Christians everywhere trying to get there. So some things are kept back from us.

But I have found and I talk about this in the book, *A Place Called Heaven*, some of the myths or misunderstandings people have about heaven. Some people think heaven is going to be boring -- floating around on the clouds, plucking the harp, or in my case playing my accordion. Or that may be hell -- I don't know what that is for some people. But they think it is going to be boring or they think it is going to be one unending church service. Does that get anybody excited? Come on! Be honest! Nobody gets excited about that.

We're going to talk in the next broadcast about what we're actually going to be doing in heaven. So I think people have that myth. I think they also have the myth that heaven's going to be the same for everybody. It's not. The Bible says there are rewards in heaven. Our rewards are based on our works as Christians. Good works do absolutely nothing to secure your place in heaven but they have everything to do with the kind of heaven we experience.

I think perhaps the greatest misunderstanding people have about heaven is that when we die we become somebody else in heaven. No. It is not somebody else who is going to be in heaven, it is we who are going to be in heaven.

I don't mean to delve into this but you brought it up. I think about Robin. It's been I guess about five years since God called her to heaven. That daughter of yours that you are going to see one day, it is going to be Robin you see, it's not somebody else. She is going to have her same name. Did you know we retain our names in heaven? You say, how do you know that pastor? Well,

when Moses and Elijah came back from heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was Moses and Elijah; that was their name. Now God may give us an additional name but we retain our original names.

We have the same interests and personalities that we do here on earth. We don't become somebody else. We have that same personality, the gifts and interests, which by the way may aid us in our new job that we have in heaven. We even are going to be recognizable in heaven. I think they're going to be things about your daughter, about my mom and dad physically that I recognize. You say, where do you get that in the Bible? Well, Jesus, his body was a prototype of our bodies, the Bible says. He was the firstborn of the dead. He was the prototype, the Greek word says, of our bodies and when Jesus' disciples saw him they recognized him; not immediately because they didn't expect to see him again but they eventually recognized him. I think that means we're going to know one another in heaven as well. So those are just some of the misunderstandings that I try to clear up in *A Place Called Heaven*.

James: It was obvious, Jack Hayford had a vision of Robin going into heaven. He didn't realize it was happening almost simultaneously. He said he had two clear visions where he could actually see clearly in his entire ministry but he watched her. He said it was evident the closer you got to heaven as you were approaching the gates and the house of God entering into that wonderful place that there was recognition going on, that you could see people that you knew. There has to be a joy in that.

I've got to be honest with you. I do think we will walk and talk with Jesus there. I think that we will talk to some of the Bible characters. I think we will probably talk to people in history that we knew.

One of the things I think will happen, I think I'm going to see a lot of people that will thank me for pointing them to Jesus. That means the world to me to know how many people will be there that either heard me preach or I witnessed and I pointed them there. Don't you think that might be one of the joys in heaven?

Dr. Jeffress: I think it is. James and Betty, it's not just imagination hoping that happens. In Luke 16 Jesus told a parable and the parable had to do about the steward who got fired from his job and he used his present position to prepare for his future unemployment. Then Jesus said, "In the same way make friends for yourselves by unrighteous money that when it fails you, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."

What he was saying was use your money right now to get people to heaven so that when you get there they will welcome you. When you give to *LIFE Today*, when people give to *LIFE Today* they are using money right now that they're going to leave behind one day, they're going to use it

to ensure that there are men and women, boys and girls in heaven who would be there to greet them one day. It's true. You can't take it with you but you can send it on ahead of you. That's what you do, whether it is your investment of money or your gifts in preaching or whatever we do.

That's one of the paradoxes about heaven and life here on earth. Life on earth is very, very brief. Have y'all come to that conclusion -- how brief our time here on earth is? The Bible says we need to be thinking about what we are doing now. As brief as life is here on earth, the paradox is: How we spend this fleeting moment we have here on earth determines the kind of eternity we expend. And that's why the wisest use of our lives is to spend it on something that will outlast it.

That's what I'm hoping my book, *A Place Called Heaven* will do; will motivate people to get involved with *LIFE Outreach* and *LIFE Today* and other ministries, to use their resources, their time, their energies on doing those things that are going to outlast their lives here on earth.

James: When we talk about it, and it's really beautiful here to hold up these little shoes. When we talk about giving children shoes when they've never had any and keep them from having terrible infections and bacteria that gets in, they're actually giving people a glimpse of the glory of heaven because that's an expression of love that meets a need.

One of the things the Lord spoke to me recently, just as I was praying, and was thinking about the thought that if you give just a cup of water in my name you won't lose your reward. And it was as though the Lord spoke, you know why that statement is so significant? Well, of course, I know everything he says is significant but why just a cup of water and you won't lose this reward? And you're talking about whatever those are in heaven are for eternity or even in life now. The Lord said, "What it means when you give a cup of water, it means you noticed."

When you notice something and you meet a need you are doing what Jesus does when he came to meet needs to minister and he left us here to do it. If we notice something and we touch somebody, I believe that's laying up treasure in heaven. I believe many of those people we touch with love are going to be in heaven. Like I said a moment ago, a lot of them were to come and express gratitude. I think there are going to be people who support the outreaches and the missionaries like you've been talking about at *LIFE* who are going to meet people up there who know, somehow, in that spiritual reality of eternity that you're the one that made it possible for me to be reached. I think there's going to be great joy. You know you have a tremendous interest, Betty and it really intensified with the loss of our daughter.

Betty: I just really -- after I knew Robin was there, I thought I want to know all about the place where our daughter is because as a mother, when my children were small and they'd say, "Can I

go here? Can I go there?" I sat and I found out where they were going to be, how long they were going to be there and what the place was like that they were going to be, the people they were going to be around. That hasn't changed. My mother's heart is I want to know all about the place that our daughter is.

I so look forward to reading your book because I think it's good for us to realize that's our destination but we need to be as close to God here on earth so that we can walk the journey that he has us to walk on so that more can be reached and they can go to that destination.

Dr. Jeffress: Absolutely! You've said it beautifully. You have.

James: I think that that was one of the things that really got me and the vision of Jack when he said as he looked past Robin and as far as he could see, he said he saw people walking and the hastening of their step as they approached.

Boy, evangelistic heart of mine just started pounding. I don't want anybody to miss it. I don't know where you are in your journey, I don't want you to miss that. God has such a love for you that he hung that love on a cross to take all of our sin and our guilt and our shame and laid all of that on his son in order that we might be redeemed from the death that transgressions and sin brings and give us life -- eternal life in his presence where these things that break our heart and crush us are no more.

The other thing that is so beautiful you need to realize is that as you receive this life that he offers, then the kingdom of heaven in a great degree comes in now, the reality of heaven and the person of heaven and the one who gives us heaven lives in us so that people can see the power of that person in our lives and then spend eternity with them.

I feel like, doc, that if we would allow this reality of Jesus to be in us, I think more people would want to be certain they didn't miss it. They wouldn't see it as something to be dreaded. I think what you've done in *The Place Called Heaven* and the truths, you've been given a gift and I want to say to you, that we had Erwin McManus here talks about if you've taken your gift and really devoted yourself to it, I want to say in watching you and I'm pleased that you heard me when I was young and you much younger, and you listened to me preach. I have a sense that you have an appreciation for our ministry.

But I want to say to you that I watch a man who has taken the gifts God has given him and you have devoted yourself to developing what God gave you and to knowing his word, wanting to share it. You've wanted to be an encourager, even when it is tough and some might not understand. You've been willing to stand boldly; and for you to take the time and the effort. But you spent a lot of time studying, praying, preparing, and writing. I want to personally thank you

for that devotion, for the way you've invested in your gift and invested the gift in the lives of others. Would you say thanks to Dr. Robert Jeffress?

Dr. Jeffress: Thank you very much.

James: As well as to your church family. I'm hoping everybody will get the book. And above all, listen, don't miss heaven! There is only one way to heaven. There is only one way to the Father, it's Jesus. There's not many ways, there's one way. "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life; no one comes to the father or the father's house without me." There's only one way.

Father, I pray for every person watching who may not know you as the way, who may have even been distracted or hurt by some kind of religion or religious practice or religious people, but they haven't been hurt by Jesus. Father, today, lift Jesus up before their eyes in such a way that they would invite him into their lives; in Jesus' name.

If you want someone to pray with you, you see the phone number there? You could call right now and say, "I want to pray with you." Ask Jesus into your heart. I wrote a Bible study about *Knowing God As Father*. It is a very simple story and teaching to help you grow. You want someone to pray with you? You don't want to miss heaven? You call right now and say, "I want that."

Dr. Jeffress, we're going to give our viewers an opportunity to do something very exciting. We're going to give them an opportunity for Christmas to give Shoes and Smiles for Christmas. I think you're going to like what you're about to see. I want you to watch this closely.

On the mission field

Ralph: James and Betty, you came to China many years ago and you saw the need and your heart was touched. In fact, your hearts were broken. These little children here didn't have a home, didn't have nowhere to live. But we have a missionary partner here now who takes these children in. They come from several different scenarios that would just break your heart. But these people bring them in. They have a home here for them. It is one of our LIFE Centers. They have various needs.

Some of those kids have that cleft lip, cleft palate need and they need a surgery. Little Isaac here, he's been one of those that came here with that need but he's had the surgery now. He's one of the recipients of Christmas smiles and we really thank God for that.

James, because of that vision God gave you that year, many children's lives have been changed

forever and God has been bringing children through this center year after year after year, just many of them coming through with various needs. I'm always reminded in Matthew 25 where Jesus says, "As you do it to the least of these you do it unto me."

And just know that when we bring smiles, Christmas smiles to these little ones like Pippa, we know Jesus is smiling up above as his children are being loved on in a way that he would desirous us to do.

So thank you to everybody for being so generous so that these little ones can have life and have it more abundantly and just bring joy to their little hearts. God bless you!

End of clip

In the studio

James: As Betty and I watch those cut ins of the time in China, you can tell that was many years ago, we went there with a broken heart. Those were called "the dying rooms." We were the only people ever allowed to go into the dying rooms with cameras and the only reason they let us do that is because they trusted us. They knew we loved them. Those weren't actually dying rooms. In their meager means of approaching disease, they didn't know how to deal with the ones they couldn't diagnose. So they would put those little children that were very sick, away from the other children trying to keep them alive. And we told them, "We want to help you keep them alive." They weren't trying to be mean; they were trying to save lives.

And one of the little girls you saw was Hope, the little girl with the kind of communist jacket on; she was blind. We loved her and I prayed she would get a home. She got one here. And boy, it was quite an experience. She has now graduated from college. She's quite a leader and she brought her best friend over here, because they went back and got her too. The stories are just endless.

Betty, it is what love does. When I go back and look at those scenes, I realize that we would come home with a broken heart of the missionaries and the broken heart of people and we would say to you, "Let's heal those hearts." Do you know what you did? You put the arms of God around them.

And right now we're doing Christmas Shoes & Smiles like we just showed you a child that could smile that couldn't before. Betty and I have decided we always give at each project, when you start, we give right up front, everything we do with the missionaries. But we decided this week we're going to give two more smiles, another \$1,000 for two more smiles for Christmas. And we're going to give another 50 pairs of shoes this week. We need a lot of that.

In this last week now, because we want to give the shoes to all these children all over the world, thousands and thousands of little children have shoes. It's \$36 to give ten children shoes. Surely you can do that. Would there be any way you could give 50 children shoes for Christmas by giving \$180? If you can, I believe you will.

Then \$1,000 for the smiles; it may be some of you can do even more than that. And say, you know what? I'm going to help a lot of children because I want to. See I'm smiling because I know what love does. So Betty and I are asking you right now this week, go online, you see the website, call that number and you make the best gift you can. Take your bankcard, use it like a check, that's how you should always use it. Or you can write a check and make it to *LIFE* but please call us and tell us you're mailing because we need to know this week because we really do need a big boost of support to get all of these shoes out.

We have some beautiful Christmas shoes to send you. The one this year that we're sending for any gift is a crystal shoe. It's absolutely beautiful. I don't know how well the light reflects off this but I'm telling you, that is beautiful! And then we have the whole box of shoes, that's seven of all of them that we've given over the years, one each year and we'll send all of them to you if you'd just give 50 kids some shoes. Make that gift of \$180. We're just sending this to you to bless you. You hang these little shoes up and you think about all of the smiles and all the joy you've given to children all over the world.

Go online, or dial the number and you make the gift God put on your heart. Thank you so much for doing it. Remember! This is the last week right now and we really do need some special help. Thanks for giving 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.

Far too many children living in poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and disease that could lead to crippling consequences -- and even death.

By responding today you can help 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 the 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 crystal 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 determined eagle bronze sculpture. This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

On the mission field

Tammy: This is just one of millions of children all around the world in desperate need of a simple pair of shoes. I am so privileged to be a part of *LIFE Outreach* who not only brings Water for LIFE, Rescue for LIFE, food programs but also shoes; shoes to children who desperately need them to protect their little feet from cuts, from tears, from even waterborne illness that may get into the cut and infect it. Gosh, we can go on and on and on until the end result is that they could lose their very feet.

Please why don't you join me today? Go to your phone or go online and do whatever you can to make a difference just one child at a time -- one pair of shoes at a time.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty and I are joining to say thank you for the smiles you're going to put on a lot of faces, I promise you, not just the one who gets the surgery but all their family and friends. And then the shoes, thank you for it.

By the way, I hope you will go online or go to the bookstore. You may know someone that really needs this and I think all of us need the insight. We certainly understand that fully. Get it online or in the bookstores but let me say this to you. You help us give some Shoes and Smiles and you want Dr. Jeffress' book, you just ask for it. We'll be glad to send it to you just to say thanks for sharing the love of God.

Would you join us saying thanks to Dr. Jeffress? He is going to be back with us. He'll be here

for another program so don't miss this week. Thank you!