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Week 36: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

"Kingdom Living" #1

James Robison

Tony Evans

James: I want to welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I think this week may be a week of the most important programming you may ever hear period, not only on *LIFE Today* but period.

I'm James Robison. You're going to hear me talking to a man that I respect so much, Dr. Tony Evans. I wish the whole church in the whole world would listen to him. He is talking about kingdom life. I had been making it very clear every chance I get that we were not left here to get out of here. We weren't just left here to get to heaven; that's a fact when we're born again, we're going to be there forever. But we were actually left here to reveal heaven and the Father, the kingdom of heaven under the Father's oversight with Jesus as Lord of lords and King of kings. That's our responsibility.

As I was praying just before we came on I just said, "Lord, please let someone allow you to put your arms around them. The moment I prayed that it was as though the Father impressed upon my heart, wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone watching the program would help get my arms around people all over the world that I love so deeply and who feel too often overlooked?"

I believe the viewers of *LIFE Today* have become in so many ways the clearest possible expression of the undeniable love of God and truly wanting to comfort those who are afflicted, to feed the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to really notice the least of these.

I want you to listen very, very closely to Dr. Tony Evans. And keep this in mind, the Lord impressed me ten years ago that he wants to heal this nation and I believe we're watching God answer the prayers of serious kingdom-minded Christians right now. Don't stop praying! That's where the real battle is because we're not fighting flesh and blood but powers and principalities in the realm of the spirit.

Listen closely and be blessed today and all this week.

James: Welcome Tony Evans to be with us.

[Applause]

Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Urban Alternative, and one of the best friends I've got. I just want you to know we love you.

Tony: Thank you.

James: Thank you for being here. I need to ask the question because we've been talking about the kingdom. You know Jesus preceded his will being done on earth as it is in heaven with the phrase, "thy kingdom come." I'm not sure his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven apart from his kingdom. Would you agree with that?

Tony: Absolutely.

James: And he said it is at hand and then he said it is in us. Well, you began writing books. I don't know if this was the first one but I've had this for quite a while. I've got it marked up pretty good, *The Kingdom Agenda*. Is this the first one you wrote on the kingdom?

Tony: Yeah. That was the foundational piece for everything else that would come after it.

James: And how many books now have you written related to the kingdom?

Tony: Probably six with another four that are in process right now.

James: Okay, and this is the latest one out, *Kingdom Disciples*. This has just come out. And I say to all of you, everything that Tony has done, in my opinion, is just spot on.

Now why did you -- when and why did you become so interested in the reality of the kingdom? We know there is a kingdom to come but you seem to believe with all your heart that there's a kingdom that is at hand and within us and you seem to think it matters or should matter.

Tony: Well, it all started when I was at Dallas Seminary, which is a dispensational school so it emphasizes things to come and the rapture and the things that follow that. But what I was noticing was a dichotomy between the theology and the practice in terms of a culture. In other words, you can believe in Jesus Christ as savior and talk about personal discipleship but it wasn't infecting and affecting the environment. The racial strife was still the same way, class strife, there was a continuous political strife on both sides of the divide but everybody is loving Jesus.

So the question was what was missing? This led to a search and this search led me to come to a realization that the unifying theme of the Bible is the glory of God through the advancement of his kingdom. The theme you see from the beginning of Genesis to the end of revelation is the kingdom of God. In fact, when Jesus comes on the earth physically and as a man, God becomes a man, the first message that he preaches, Matthew 4:17 is: "I have come to proclaim the kingdom of God." He tells the church in Matthew 16, and he is the first one who uses the word ecclesia, which is the word for church, "I'm going to give you the church, the keys to the kingdom of heaven."

So when I saw that people who believed in Jesus were not integrating him

comprehensively into all of life then it occurred to me that we are missing the kingdom while verbally pledging allegiance to the king, creating a theological spiritual and pragmatic consternation and division within ourselves and within our culture.

So that got me going on this kingdom... Tracing the word *kingdom* through the Bible. Looking at the end of the book of Acts, the last two verses Paul says to anyone who would listen, he came preaching Jesus Christ *and* the kingdom of God. So he understood that to proclaim Christ and to exclude the kingdom is to not make the full proclamation so he did both. And that is a missing message in the church today and that's why we still are looking at the White House to do what God is waiting for the church house to take care of.

James: Exactly right! Do y'all say amen to what you just heard? That is absolutely powerful!

Tony, I have to look at my own journey with the Lord and I know you've done that too, not only through scripture but what actually happens because of kingdom reality and power. When Jesus said that his kingdom is within us, when he said he sent another of the same kind to live in us, that meant the power of the Holy Spirit, that meant that we can have love and joy and peace that is totally supernatural, that means we have divine enabling to do the things that he wants us to do.

Something happened to me as a teenager and to the girl that I married; and see this is very precious to me when I say it. The two of us as teenagers lost our lives in his kingdom purpose and we found it and we found far more than any life we could have ever imagined. We found his kingdom life being fulfilled in us, and we're seeing it in our children. And I've got to tell you, I've watched what God's done with your family. We love your family so much because we see kingdom effect. You know that what's happened to your children was beyond Tony and Lois. There was some kind of power in play and it is marvelous to watch.

Now my concern is this. When I look at the church all over the world I don't feel like I see this kingdom presence manifestation in play. It is as though we think he has saved us to get us out of here rather than to get him in here because he is in us. I think we put too much focus on him coming back rather than his kingdom coming in power in the church for the world to behold his glory. Does that make sense?

Tony: Absolutely. That's part of the bifurcation that we're dealing with. The fact that we're enamored, as we should be in the sweet by-and-by, we miss the nasty here-and-now. And the fact that the king has saved us not only for our eternal destiny but for our historical impact. And because we've missed that we've missed the authority that comes with the kingdom.

I wrote *Kingdom Disciples* because I wanted to highlight the greater the discipleship the greater the kingdom authority that he transfers to us. The less the discipleship, the less kingdom authority he transfers to us. When you read Saint John Chapter 2 verses 23 to 25, it says many believed in Christ. Pisteuo is a Greek phrase there and that means to become a Christian. Many believed in him but then it says but he would not commit himself to them because he knew what was in them. So they got converted but they were of no use to him because they had not understood the full reality of what full commitment and "kingdom living" looks like yet.

In the great commission, Jesus says, "all authority belongs to me, up there in heaven and down here on earth. I want you to make disciples." But here's what's often not preached when you hear the great commission: "I want you to make disciples of the nations" -- not just of individuals in the nations. Nations consist of groups of individuals who are politically and socially engaged with one another in a governmental structure. So God is not only interested in discipling the individuals he is interested in bringing impact and discipleship to the systems in which those individuals live, work, play, go to school and all of the things.

So because we have not had a comprehensive view of the kingdom but only a personal

view of the kingdom, get saved and live a better Christian life, then we are not having kingdom influence and kingdom impact while we're being nice Christians going to church on Sunday.

James: I can't say a big enough shout amen to that. That is absolutely 100% right. If we're having a kingdom impact it is going to affect the circle nearest you first, your marriage, your family, then the community, subdivision, area where you live, then it goes out to the city, then to the county, then to the state, then to the nation; is that correct?

Tony: Yes. Psalm 128 gives four spheres of kingdom life. It starts off with your personal life: To fear God means to take God seriously. In verse three of Psalm 128, it says you bring it home, your wife becomes a fruitful vine, and your children become olive plants around your table. So you bring it home first.

Then it says, "God will then do greater things with you," verse five, "he will bless you in Zion." Zion in the Old Testament was the temple. According to Hebrews Chapter 12, Zion in the New Testament is the church. So you bring your family to the church to let them see they're part of something bigger; that there are a lot of other folks that are thinking kingdom like us. Then he concludes with saying, "Then you will see the prosperity of the city and then you will see the shalom and the wellbeing of the nation and you'll see your children's children propagating this to the next generation." So "kingdom living," individual, family, church, society, because it is a comprehensive impact when you're kingdom minded.

James: Now is the kingdom supposed to affect education, academics?

Tony: Absolutely! Since all truth is rooted in God and he is the root of anything that is true, anything that you learn, if it is going to be legitimate must be consistent with who he is. If it is inconsistent with who he is then it is invalid information that has no theological base and therefore will bring corruption to the life and to the culture.

James: And to the academic system.

Tony: And to the academic system as well.

James: How about arts and entertainment? Is the kingdom supposed to affect that?

Tony: God wants to sanctify everything. That's why we let Priscilla be in *War Room*.

[Laughter]

James: Well, it was great. It was great!

Tony: God is supposed to sanctify everything. When you trace God's kingdom movement through the Old Testament, he would invade secular cultures and he would grab things, the bounty, and he would put it, it says, "Under the ban." That means it is now for God's usage or destruction because now God was overseeing it. What God wants us to do is grab what is in the hands of the evil ones, bring it into subjection to the rule of Christ so that it comes under his kingdom covering and therefore has kingdom benefits. That's why God can tell his people in Jeremiah 29:7, "Even though you're in pagan Babylon, seek the welfare of the city in which I have placed you" -- pagan city -- "for your prayer and your seeking warfare of that pagan city will not only make it better for them it will make it better for you."

James: That means that no matter who is in the White House or who is in Congress or who is in leadership, we should be praying for the welfare and the benefit of the people. And God hears our prayers.

Tony: Absolutely! We should be leveraging kingdom influence at the highest possible places. Why? Because the Bible says that God moves the heart of the king in whichever way he wills. So he want to influence God to influence them to influence us for righteousness.

James: Y'all like this? Are y'all out there? Lois, you got a big smile on your face. It's so beautiful. I want to thank you for all that you have deposited in him in love and confidence and support and lifting him up. You are precious beyond words. Thank you for the way you've loved this man. And you are a beautiful person.

Are we supposed to affect politics with kingdom impact?

Tony: You cannot read the Bible and not see God's activity in politics. Number one, he sets up nations and tears them down; that's number one. In Isaiah Chapter 40 he blows on them to determine whether they keep existing or not. Then he's got Daniel and Babylon and he's got the Medo-Persian Empire and he's even got a king, he says, "He doesn't know me but I'm still going to use him." So God is involved in the political arena.

You've got Paul having the first sit-in in Acts chapter 16 in the Bible. He refuses the injustice of the Roman government and so he did a sit-in in order to call for justice. You've got Paul trying to get to Rome so he can get to the head of the government in order to introduce Christ and to bring righteousness there. So you've got politics all through the Bible.

So to exempt politics from the kingdom of God, even God is political since he is the King of kings. So he's very interested in kingship and kingdoms. You've got the whole book of Daniel that prophesies the kingdoms in order as they will come and how end times will come as a result of that. You've got him telling Daniel to tell Nebuchadnezzar that heaven rules him. "You're a pagan, you think you're in charge, I'm going to show you. I'm going to make you crazy."

[Laughter]

James: Well, I hope you understand that when we are praying and we're really seeking his face, what pleases him, he says he will answer. And when we turn from our wicked

ways, which will would also include lack of interest, lack of involvement, lack of focused prayer on the crisis situations we face, we have really gotten way out of the center of God's will and the restoration process oftentimes begins with what looks like destruction because you have to tear some things down. Sometimes all the way until you get rid of a foundation that has to be replaced and restored before you can actually rebuild the house.

Right now we're in that process. I'm telling you, the person that wants to help more than any power in the universe is our Father in heaven. He wants to heal our land. He wants us to be fruitful and us to be bear fruit but also to bear the benefits and enjoy the benefits of fruitfulness in every way so that we can share his love all over the world.

One of the things the viewers of *LIFE Today* have proven to us and to the whole world is that when you're full of the love of God you're going to share it with those who desperately need it. Right now you're going to see some images of what God's love does through you and many others just like you. It's not even possible for you to watch the scenes and the expressions of love and not find yourself grateful that there are those people who will release that river of love and that river of life, which you can do. But you're also going to see something that right now is unique and special. You're going to see us do something in addition to giving life, you're going to see expressions of love that bring joy, and I think it's going to put a smile on your face.

I want you to watch this very prayerfully but then I want you with all your heart to leap in and say God, I am going to put smiles on a lot of faces and do a whole lot of good and impact individuals for all eternity. That's kingdom reality. Watch this prayerfully.

On the mission field

Announcer: All around the world children face severe problems like starvation, filthy drinking water, and sexual predation. But where heartache abounds, so do opportunities to put God's love into action.

Recently you may have helped us seize these opportunities by providing a child with a daily bowl of food, rescuing an at-risk girl from human traffickers or drilling a clean water well for a needy village.

This coming Christmas, we have an opportunity to bless many of these same children with a special gift that they will cherish and that will protect their very lives.

Betty: This is Berta and we want to be able to get her children some shoes. It's not just a matter of giving them something for their feet, it's very important, but the main thing is they get diseases walking around here barefoot and their little feet just get tortured.

Tammy: I guess you don't really think about if she's walking around without a pair of shoes how it affects her feet. If her foot gets cut and she is stepping even in contaminated water, how that could affect her feet -- infect her feet.

>> They are happy to have shoes in their life. I would like to say thank you for all your kindness to help my people, especially small, small kids that they never have a chance to have shoes to put on.

Announcer: Help make this Christmas one these children will never forget. Help us provide Christmas Shoes and Smiles.

>> Thank you so much. May God bless you for all your generosity.

[Laughter]

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'm sorry. I love it! I'm holding a couple of the shoes. The little ones, it is kind of

like holding your -- see we have great grandbabies now. We're on our way to having our fifth great grandchild; 11 grandchildren and not too long from now we'll have five great grandchildren, already have four. And you see those little booties and sometimes, you preserve them. These precious little feet!

And then these little feet. And these are adjustable so that you can actually, the children can wear them for quite a while. By the way, they're very durable. You talk about a gift from heaven, that's really what it's like. And it is for Christmas! That's why we're starting way ahead of time because at Christmas, who we're pointing to the greatest gift, we want to give a gift that everyone can enjoy. And we're just praying to God that we'll have the greatest outpouring of love we have ever seen.

This is Shoes and Smiles: \$36 gives ten children shoes. I mean you think about that. Isn't that an amazing gift? But let me tell you this too because I don't know what level you're going to go at. I'm praying, Lord, please, people can give \$72 and give 20 children shoes, let them do it. But in addition to the shoes we want to give smiles, cleft palate surgery; \$500 is what the surgeries cost on the average. Would you gift a couple of kids smiles? Can you imagine the smile that is going to put on parent's faces when they finally see a child that has fought with deformity that's caused them to be self-conscious, uncomfortable, sometimes very difficult to even eat and you're going to give them a smile and you're going to put a smile on every member of their family's face.

We're going to send you the beautiful little crystal shoe. They're all beautiful. I hope you can see that with appreciation. This is amazing to me. We have these hanging all over our tree. Betty actually got a small tree that we could put up where we could put the shoes on it and it would stand out more. But we've just been giving steady and we actually can put the shoes on the big tree; and many people who come to see us or our family, they lean in and they see them and we get to talk about an expression of love.

We have some gifts for you that I know will be a blessing, the candle, it really is, it's a joy to be able to send something to you that just reminds you of what your love does. But

also, I think oftentimes reminds you to pray for those who feel like no one noticed. But God did and you did and through you God expresses his love.

Would you go online right now? Or would you dial that number and take your bankcard? Use it like a check, please and make the very best gift you can. God bless you as you do it and I know he will.

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 often take for granted like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme 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 can 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 and for many, just in time for the holidays! Your gift of \$36 will help provide 10 pairs of shoes, a gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pair and a gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas Shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request this beautifully crafted red crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display at each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more you may request "The Light Shines in Darkness" frosted glass candle featuring a beautiful golden design that's scripture from John 1:5.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries and you may request the "Bridge of Faith" canvas print by Thomas Kinkade. 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'm 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 could go on and on and on to the end result being 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 to just one child at a time, one pair of shoes at a time.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, I want to thank you so much. Betty is not with me this week because we knew we were going to be introducing the interaction with Tony Evans and really, many business leaders and their wives who came because they realized that we are here on a divine assignment. You see heaven is a certainty, but Jesus taught us to pray, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The only way God's will will be done on this earth as it is in heaven is that we allow the King of kings to reign in our heart and we release the power of his presence and his wisdom and his will in every area of life. That's kingdom life. Let's live with kingdom purpose because he said, "When you lose your life in my purpose, you'll find it." And indeed we do!