

9/3/19

Week 36: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Margaret Feinberg

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me as always. We have a friend of ours today, Miss Margaret Feinberg is here and she brought some goodies.

Sheila: This book -- but the minute I saw the word *taste* I was like book her immediately! So *Taste and See: Discovering God among butchers, bakers and fresh food makers*. Welcome Margaret Feinstein.

[Laughter]

Feinberg! I just called you Margaret Feinstein.

Margaret: It's my Jewish cousin. It's fine.

[Laughter]

Sheila: This is an intriguing title for a book. What led to this whole adventure?

Margaret: I love food. I think we all have shared many a meal. I really wanted to understand food in the Bible. And so I started looking at food in the scripture. What I began to discover is that it literally pops and sizzles on almost every page. So I zeroed in on six different foods and I began to look for the people who plant and process and procure them and spend time with them.

This adventure of diving into the scripture led me to go fish in the Galilee, to pluck figs in Croatia, to travel to California, to pick figs, to go to Yale University to bake bread with an expert on ancient grains.

Randy: Kind of sounds like an excuse to eat and travel if you ask me.

Margaret: I might have gained 15 pounds writing this book -- 15 glorious pounds.

Randy: You brought some things.

Sheila: Yeah! I noticed that.

Randy: Other than the cookies.

Sheila: Oh, I'm going to ignore that part. I'm just looking at the plate of cookies here. So what do these have to do with your book?

Margaret: Yeah! So the foods I looked at, one of them was salt. I actually went 410 feet down into a salt mine. So those are a dark chocolate sea salt cookie with walnuts and they're gluten free.

Randy: Are you going to get one? I told her to wait until the end of the program.

Sheila: No! What woman is going to sit with a plate of cookies in front of her the whole program and not try them?

Margaret: What do you think?

Sheila: Actually, really good. Talk about the whole salt thing because I find that fascinating.

Margaret: So I thought, if I'm going to *Taste and See*, we've got to have recipes in the book and this is one of them. There are so many more. But when I went 410 feet down into a salt mine I realized that all of the salt that I always thought of kind of looked like this. It looked like the table salt. I thought if I really want to understand the words of Jesus that "you are the salt of the earth," I wanted to see what he was talking about.

So I descended 410 feet down into a salt mine in Redmond, Utah into the Redmond Salt Mine. What I discovered is that salt is not like this. This is like a chemically altered since 1924, fortified with iodine -- salt. But salt is always hewn with its natural minerals. So when I descended into the salt mine, I didn't see bright white I actually saw this incredibly rich colors. The brown comes from the magnesium and the red comes from the iron. When this is ground up it looks like a pink Himalayan salt. It is so incredibly gorgeous when the light reflects off of it.

Why that's significant is because when Jesus says, "You are the salt of the earth," he was never talking about this. Whether it came from the Dead Sea or the Mediterranean Sea or from the salt mines in Israel, it was always hewn with its natural surrounding minerals. Just as you and I have been hewn by God, we've been pulled out with our unique backgrounds, our personalities, our strengths, our weaknesses, our quirks and he wants to use all of that as he pours us out as the salt of the earth.

I think sometimes, I don't know about you, but it is tempting to want to hide our darker areas kind of like this, and yet what I discovered in the salt mine is it's actually these darker areas that the chefs love the most because they bring out the higher and the lower notes in the meals that they're preparing. Just like when I know you've passionately shared about your struggle with depression or I've shared about my battle with an aggressive form of cancer. A lot of times we're tempted to hide back our darker areas of our life thinking that there's shame or there's pain. And yet, that is the exact thing that God wants to use in our life to bring forth his glory and spread us out in the kingdom.

Sheila: Wow! That is powerful, Margaret. So tell us about one of your other adventures.

Margaret: Hoo! Goodness, there were so many. One of my favorites was to go and pluck olives; actually, to a place in Croatia.

Sheila: Why Croatia?

Randy: Beautiful there; right?

Margaret: It is absolutely gorgeous. A missionary happened to invite me over and she and her family needed help bringing in their olives. So they lived so remote that her parents didn't have electricity.

I remember going out to pick the olives and we climbed in this jelly-bean-size car and drove to the back of these remote mountains. We had two tools, and that was a white pail and a blue tarp. We would go up and we would pick the olives. We would reach up the branch and massage them until the olives dropped either into the pail or if we missed, they would fall on the blue tarp but we would still gather them.

What was incredible was that after picking olives for ten hours a day, you get scratches and you get little cuts on your hands, and your arms would be sore, and your lower back, I would come home and it would look like my hands had been at a world class spa all day. That's because God created the olive with antioxidant, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties.

So when you start to look at olives in the scripture you remember that the oil of it was used to anoint the kings and the priests who were meant to bring healing to the land. We remember that when Jesus Christ came he was called the Anointed One, the Messiah -- literally dripping with olive oil. And on the night of his arrest he went to the Garden of Gethsemane, the garden of the olive press. Just as in that place the olives were pressed down and they would writhe and wrestle underneath that weight and the oil would drip out, here is Christ, the very Messiah writhing and wrestling under the anxiety and the

brutality of the cross until blood drips out of him. And yet in that place he says, "Not my will but yours be done." And he goes forward and he endures the cross and he rises up three days later with resurrection power in his wings.

Randy: The ultimate healing.

Margaret: So we should not be surprised that in James chapter five it describes that when we are sick, whether that is emotional or whether that is physical or whether that is spiritual, that we are called to go to the elders of the church and have them pray for us but to have them anoint us with oil.

I think that speaks to just how much Christ wants to heal us. That he is one who no matter what our infirmity, no matter what our pain, no matter what our loss, he rises time and time again with resurrection healing in his wings.

What I've seen in my own life and in my own struggles and you know this Sheila, from my battle with cancer and the chronic pain that I was left with, but even in those areas where maybe God is not healing you in one area, it does not mean that he is not healing you in 10,000 others.

Sheila: You talk about fishing in Galilee. What was that experience like? That had to be quite remarkable.

Margaret: I had an incredible host by the name of Edo who had some friends who were fishermen. We went out on their boat and we laid the net and it was during the day. What was interesting is we laid the net, and these were experienced fishermen; these were people who had been fishing on the Galilee for 38 years. And as we laid the net and we went through and we waited, we barely caught a handful of fish.

What I learned is that in the gospels, often we would see Jesus going to the disciples and telling them to put their net on the other side of the boat. I never realized that that was

layered miracle upon miracle upon miracle because when Jesus went out and he instructed them to do that the fishermen, just like the ones I fished with knew that fish in the Galilee are primarily not caught during the day, they're often caught during the night. That's why in the gospels we constantly see the fishermen coming back in the morning. And so here they are, they're coming back in the morning and the fish were often caught in the shallows. And yet Jesus says during the day to go out and to cast their net into the deep waters.

In antiquity the nets were made of linen so the fish could always see the net so that's why you would they ever catch them during the day. So for Christ to do this to experienced fishermen, you can just picture the disciples going this has got to be the craziest thing I've ever been asked to do. This is not how you catch fish in the Galilee. And yet they go out and all of the sudden their nets, on multiple occasions are busting at the seams.

We start to see in our own lives those times when we get that leading and that nudge from the Holy Spirit to go do something that seems so counterintuitive, to go talk to that person, to go give that gift, to reach out and serve in that area where we tell ourselves we don't have any talents, we don't have any gifts; not realizing that that may be the very place that God wants to work a mighty miracle, not just in our lives but in the lives around us. And just like the fishermen, the stories that they will tell for years to come of the goodness and the power of our God.

Randy: It seems like listening to you and reading your book myself some, that your interest in food and some of the properties and the things, because you're the one that walks around your neighborhood and picks fruit off your neighbor's vines -- with their permission! So you don't just go for a walk for exercise, you come back with dinner; right? Which is great.

But in doing that, it is like the parables and a lot of the passages in the Bible which do reference food, they sort of come alive into a deeper meaning. I think the reason the Bible uses those terms is to relate to the people that the Bible was written for in that time.

And sometimes, I think by getting away from that by using our salt in the shaker, we've lost a little bit of the connection and some of the meaning.

Did you find that as you studied the scriptures and the food, as you used that as an excuse to travel the world, that the meaning really sort of became layered and layered and new and fresh?

Margaret: It did. One of my favorites comes from John 15 in the invitation of Christ that we would be people who abide in him. I never realized, it is not just about the grape remaining connected to the vine and the vine to the branch, and those connection points are so deep in, but it's actually what's going on beneath the soil because I always thought that to grow really great grapes I needed lush, rich, soil. And a vintner taught me that actually, what you need is rocky, difficult soil. If you want to grow world class grapes, that there are some vintners who will go out and they will inspect the vines and they will take a rock, they will take a stone, they will take that difficult area and they will place it next to the vine because they know that it is that rock, that stone, that difficult area that will force the roots to go deep for those grapes to attain flavors and layers that they could not otherwise.

I don't know about you guys, but I know I have stones and I have rocks in my life. I have those places like you do where I have cried out to Jesus, if not one, if not a dozen, a hundred or a thousand times, God, will you just take that away? And it does not budge. It is like in those moments the Holy Spirit says, "Do you not know, have you not heard that that stone, that rock, that difficult area is the very thing that I will use to produce the flavor of my son Jesus Christ in you?"

So when we start to dig into the scriptures and these food references, we discover that there is so much more richness in what God and Christ have been communicating to all of us.

Sheila: What kind of feedback have you been getting from this book, Margaret?

Margaret: It's been so encouraging. People who have grown up in the church and read the Bible their whole lives, are having the scripture come alive in a whole new way. But what I'm loving is how many people along with the Bible study are opening up their homes to people who maybe are just in their own space in their spiritual journeys saying, "Hey, would you like to come over and talk about food and spirituality?" And all the sudden people are coming together in their homes and opening up new avenues of conversation and sharing their faith because it is so non-threatening. It is one thing to say, "Would you like to come over and study the book of Deuteronomy?"

Randy: Right. Right.

Sheila: Not a big winner. No.

Margaret: Nope. Nope. But if you say, "Hey! Do you want to come over for some appetizers? We're going to talk about spirituality and food." People are like, "Yes. Yes, sign me up." And so to see this growth of people sharing their faith and being equipped to do it, it is incredible.

And then the other is, at the end of every chapter there are these activities that families can do around the home and they're so fun. For instance, back to the one with the olives. At the end of a meal and kind of talking about these rich lessons about olives and olive passages in scripture, taking the olive oil and each person just dipping a finger in and then just sharing one area of their life, maybe it is physical or it's emotional or it's financial where they most need healing and that everybody around the table is praying for each other.

Sheila: That's powerful!

Margaret: Yeah! Or like with the fishing on the Galilee, recognizing that if you stand at the Galilee there are certain places you can stand and you look around that lake and you

can see place after place where Christ did miracle after miracle, where he walked on water or he hushed the storms, where he healed people, where he preached the sermons, where he did so many powerful things. We have the invitation to just draw a little map in our lives and start noting the miracles that God has been doing in our lives.

Because as we start to remember those it strengthens our faith with the hope that we will experience yet another miracle from God. Because some of us, we are just one day, one prayer, one meeting, one week away from seeing God's power unleashed in our lives.

Sheila: You mentioned your own battle with cancer and the pain. Where are you in your journey, Margaret?

Margaret: Yeah, grateful to say that the numbers are steady, so things are looking really good. But the damage done to my body is still present. A lot of burning on one of my lungs, as well as the lymphedema and the chronic pain left over from the surgeries. So that is something that I wrestle with every day and some days are easier than others.

People who live in chronic pain know that some days you can get by on a scale from one to ten maybe with a one or two or a three but other days it jumps up to a ten and you can hardly think straight. It is like your emotional wherewithal is gone.

Randy: How do you reconcile that? Because you just gave us a great sermon on healing, and you talk about the olives, and you're talking about praying for others for healing but you need some healing too. How do you go day to day with that?

Margaret: I cry out for God's healing. I ask him to be the healer in my life. I trust him to be the healer in my life. But as I described, there are times we pray for one thing, we want healing here and God is bringing it in 10,000 other areas. And even as parts of me physically still hurt, I feel parts of my soul, of my emotions, of the woundedness that I experienced as a child in growing up being healed.

So I choose to find the strength to celebrate those healings of God. Because if we're just waiting on one thing that isn't healed, we will get trapped in disappointment. And worse, we will be blinded from the full power and the full unleashing of God's healing that he wants to do. I know there are times I prayed to God. I've said, "God, I want this one thing from you." And I sense the Holy Spirit say, "Margaret, that is not even in my top ten -- that is not even in my top ten."

So in the process of prayer we realign our hearts to what is really important to God knowing that he is always for us and he always wants our best.

Randy: You want to say a quick prayer for Margaret?

Sheila: I would love to. I would ask our studio audience here, would you join me? And let's just be grateful for everything that God is sharing with us through Margaret and for you at home too. But let's ask. And if you find yourself in a place where you just need a touch from God, would you allow us the privilege of praying for you? Let's pray. Let me take your hand, friend.

Father, I want to thank you so much for this sister. I want to thank you, Lord that even as she has pushed through her pain to discover the glory of who you are, even as you have walked her around so many places in the world and you have unpacked deep truths, life-changing truths, we ask as her brothers and sisters that you would pour back into her life. Lord, I pray for your healing hand to touch Margaret. That she would know healing in 10,000 ways as you would want to bring.

And I ask that too for our audience watching, for our audience here in the studio. Lord, we are hungry for you. We are thirsty for you. The greatest desire of our heart is to know you more and that our bodies would glorify you. And we ask it in the precious name of Jesus Christ our savior and our Lord.

Remember, if you need us, we are here. You can call us any time. We have an amazing

team who stand by ready to pray. This book is really great.

Randy: Sheila, I'm going to tell you how to get this book. It is called *Taste and See*. It is fun but it has some real depth and some real value to it spiritually.

But you know what? It would just bless a lot of people, including Margaret, if everybody would just call and say, "I want that book" because we will send it to you when you participate in our Christmas Shoes and Smiles. I know it is early to talk about Christmas but if you plan now you won't be like me and having to rush ship everything or run to the mall at the last minute. You start now.

This will make a great Christmas gift and what happens when you call and support Christmas Shoes and Smiles, that is an even greater gift. So just take a second and watch this and then we'll be right back to tell you how you can really make a difference and bless so many people just by doing one simple thing. Watch this real quick.

On the mission field:

Randy: As we travel around the world, one thing we've noticed is the condition of the feet of so many children. We see children all over the world running around barefoot in some terrible conditions. It's not just unsightly, it is unhealthy and potentially deadly.

As we give shoes, which is a wonderful Christmas gift, keep in mind that we are actually giving them a chance for better health -- potentially, even saving lives. We are protecting them from some really debilitating diseases, things like hookworm, several things that can happen in their feet. These protect them. So it's doubled; it's a gift to give them something they don't have and it is something to protect their health.

Just like the smiles when we go in and correct a cleft palate, we're not just giving them a cosmetic change, we're actually improving their health. Everything we do is to improve the health of others physically and spiritually.

So join with us as we celebrate the birth of our savior at Christmas and we give Christmas Shoes and Smiles.

How are you doing, buddy? Let me see if we can get this on.

End of video

In the studio:

Randy: It's amazing to see those kids dancing around in those shoes. The joy that a simple pair of shoes brings to them. I know you've seen this, Sheila. What do you think when you go out and you see how a simple gift can make just a big difference?

Sheila: It really is amazing. I know Randy mentioned it seems a little early to be talking about Christmas but the reason is that we have so many children. Our prayer is that for this Christmas we would provide shoes for 150,000 children. Do you know that over the years you have helped us give shoes to two million children? It is not just a fun thing for Christmas, it can literally be lifesaving because when their feet are cut they get all sorts of diseases through their feet.

But now we can do something so we're starting early. We want this to be the best Christmas that *LIFE Outreach*, *LIFE Today* has ever had. We want to get shoes everywhere around the world and we can do it with your help.

And not only shoes, but when children are born with cleft lip or cleft palate, in so many cultures, it's seen as a curse. So often those children are not allowed to go to school. They're kept out of society as if they're cursed by God. So we can come during the birth of Christ to say there is no curse because Jesus Christ himself became cursed on a tree so that we can be free.

Let's reach out and touch the lives of so many children this Christmas. And let's do it in

Jesus' name.

Randy: It's easy to do. That's the wonderful thing. Can you hand me one of those shoes over there that you have? Because I want to show them.

Sheila: Yeah. There you go.

Randy: I want to show you that this shoe, a pair of these shoes costs \$3.60 to get them on the feet of children that desperately need them. And it is not just a great gift. Sometimes it really can be a matter of health, a matter of life and death. But the cost of this is such that ten pairs of shoes, shoes for ten children is \$36; \$180 will give shoes to 50 children! And then the surgeries where we go in and correct the cleft palate and give that child not only a reason to smile but the ability to smile; \$500 on average with the surgeons we have around the world.

Whatever you do, do the best you can and know that when you join in Christmas Shoes and Smiles, you really will be putting a smile on a face of a child around the world. Will you go to phones or go online? Give the best gift you can. Let's make this Christmas extra special.

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 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 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 green crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display at each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 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 the beautiful "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms" bronze sculpture.

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

End of video

On the mission field:

Ralph: Little Dui here is only four months old but he is one of our latest recipients of Christmas smiles. He is getting his cleft lip surgery done. We're here today because today is his big day. Thank you so much for giving a Christmas smile to little Dui today.

I cannot explain fully in words the stories that I hear all around the world of the need for children, boys and girls just like little Dui who need this surgery. So I'm going to ask you to do this. Find the number on the screen right now. Call that number. Or if you prefer, go online, whichever gives you the greatest opportunity to give a generous gift to help little boys and girls just like Dui. And you're giving a gift that doesn't just last through the season, but it lasts a lifetime. Please give right now.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much. If the lines are busy, please call back. We want to make this a great Christmas for so many children and you will love this book. It is not just full of great wisdom, great recipes, great ideas for your family, great ideas for your neighborhood -- it is a fantastic book, Margaret. Thank you so much for being our guest. And thank you for writing this delicious book! Thank you for the cookies too.

I want to thank you for being with us here on *LIFE Today*. And we'll see you next time. God bless you!