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Week 35: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

James and Betty Robison

"Remaining Close to God"

James: We welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I want you to know that we have, for many weeks, for many months we've been spending a tremendous amount of time in prayer; praying for you, those of you who view *LIFE Today*.

Quite frankly, Betty we've been amazed at the love and the faithfulness of God expressed through you. Because when you're being challenged, and there is no question you're being challenged because we all are, never seen anything like this in my 76 years, nearly 77 years. I've never seen anything like this. Can't even imagine our national leaders having to face this.

Boy, pray hard because I really believe our leaders want to do best. Not all of them but some of them; the ones I think... well, they recognize we need God, we need religious liberty, we need faith. All lives are precious and worthy of protection. We have absolutes and principles, biblical principles that we're supposed to recognize, acknowledge and really heed. I thank God for that.

God said if we pray, the people who really know him, and I believe if the church, the people who have been born from above of the spirit have a relationship with God, not just a religious association or affiliation, not just a religious club membership so to speak, but they really know Christ. And boy, there are a lot of people who go to churches who talk about religion who obviously don't know God. They don't even believe that his words

are in fact absolutes, that they are truths to be relied upon because they are reliable, they're the truth, they're absolutes. They're unshakeable. You can defy them, but you can't break them, they're still going to stand.

And defying them brings horrific consequences on those who disregard them. It's almost like a form of suicide or murderous activity on the part of those who don't really believe God. Now you can be religious and be unkind. You can be religious and be unloving.

As a matter of fact, there are a lot of people who are very religious, even to the point of self-righteousness, which the self-righteous were some of the biggest problems Jesus had. They're the ones that got the most fervent, forceful, correction. If Jesus ever seemed to be a little sharp and almost sounded unkind it was when he was talking to those who make two-fold more the sons of hell. You look good on the outside but on the inside you're full of dead men's bones. You're just like white tombs. You may look glorious but inside there is death.

Well, there are those people there that are parts of religious groups but they're not the members of the body of Christ, really born into Christ and Christ in them. They'll have courage. They won't be cowards. They'll have convictions. And they will have compassion. And they'll be committed to truth, but they will be full of unconditional redemptive love, even when they're correcting, they do it to benefit.

So I want to talk to you about what God wants to do right now as we're facing a very important election. We certainly need the wisdom of God. And I'm going to tell you, the people that want to disqualify anybody that's not their choice, they can't out-debate them, they can't beat them in an election, so they just want to get them out, impeach them, pass laws to put them in prison. In other words, nullify the will of the people. Beware of that! Beware of it -- it is death. It will destroy freedom.

And those of us, Betty who know the source of freedom, which is Christ, we want to share that freedom because we want everybody to get the benefits of it. But we're going

to have to be courageous. We're going to have to have convictions. We're going to have to believe that we have a reliable source and we don't beat people up with it. We hold it up as a radiant beacon and that's what God's word is.

As a mother, as a grandmother and now a great-grandmother and you've been watching what's been going on. You do keep up with the news and you keep up with the good news, the word of God and you pray a lot; and you've got children, 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren and there are more on the way, what's going on in your heart right now when you watch everything happening in our country and all that we've been through, and as we face an election coming up, what's going on as a mother, grandmother?

Betty: Well, James, I look at what's going on now and I look at our life, our relationship, we've been so, so blessed. We have lived, if God took us today, we have lived a long blessed life -- a full life knowing him and being able to share him with others. What more could you ask for? But then I look at our children, our grandchildren and now great grandchildren and I think, what are they going to face? What opportunities are they going to have? What freedom are they going to have to worship the God that they know? What freedom are they going to have to be able to express themselves and to really know and find out who they are and what they want to do in life and their opportunities? It looks kind of scary right now.

And without knowing the Lord, James, we've been shut in, along with everybody else but we don't have the small children running around having to try to come up with creative ideas to keep them entertained or to teach them their lessons. So we don't have all of that that so many people, the weight is heavy, the burden is heavy. And that's when I just have to say, O God, bless these precious families that are doing their best. You're doing your best to bless your children, to take care of them, to protect them, to teach them, and to just watch over them. God gave them to you. I think, boy, I do, like you said, I have to go to God's word a lot because I kind of get down in my spirit sometimes, James, just thinking, God, what do we do? What do we do? And because of my relationship with

him, his word brings life to me.

One thing I like to do is pick up his word, and of course, go to Psalms. You can be so blessed when you read the Psalms. You know what I do? When there's nobody else in the room or in the house, I read them out loud. And I can hardly get through a chapter without weeping and knowing that God's presence is there. We just have to invite him in. He will take that loneliness, he will take that despair, he will take that fear and that defeat attitude and he will just take it away and he'll say, "Peace be still, my child. I'm with you. You are not alone."

And it just makes my day when our children post pictures of their grandchildren or their children on Facebook. I see a picture and a smile of that little baby and I think, O God, thank you! That's from you. It lights my day. So look for those things that come from God that light up your heart. And stay strong and be steadfast and be determined to stay close to him.

James: Wow! Betty said to me the other morning, she said, "James, I was just reading Psalm 18." Our wonderful friend, Dudley Hall said to me that would be a good one to read right now. But she just said, "James, I read it and I wanted to shout. And then sometimes I'd just stop and cry." But just listen to it.

"I love you, O Lord my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer." By the way, even in a pandemic, any crisis. "My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised. And I am saved from my all my enemies."

You can see the enemies of truth and freedom rising up. Yes, we've seen some things happen that tell us we need to do some serious correction, and we do, but the correction needs to come on the part of all sides. Those who have been adversely affected and those who perhaps unknowingly or even deliberately been unkind, all of that needs to change. But all parts, the offender and the offended need to say, God, you are our salvation. You

are our refuge. You are our healer. And he really is.

That's what history has revealed. Wherever his will is done people are blessed. When the righteous rule -- the righteousness of God in people rules, the people are blessed. They rejoice. That's what we're asking God for. You've seen what happens when people just in anger try to force something as a punishment for something that wasn't done right or a mistake of one person, they punish all. Do you realize in the urban community when something goes wrong and there have been business people who have put businesses in those areas, who gave jobs to people, who made it accessible for people to shop and to have things close and you come in and just destroy that and burn it? Do you realize then how difficult it is for other people to want to take the risk to come in if that's how you're going to respond if a wrong is done?

And people do make mistakes. Sometimes out of ignorance and sometimes out of anger or foolishness. You can't react that way and expect things to get better. If we turn to God and we'll have his attitude which includes forgiveness, but it also includes repentance and a change of mind and a change of actions on all parts. So that we really love our neighbor. We do unto others as we would want them to do unto us.

Listen to some of the last verses in this Psalm 18: *The Lord lives -- yes, he does! And blessed be my rock. He is the solid foundation upon which we stand. And exalted be the God of my salvation.*

Exalt him! Lift him up! Let people know he is the real difference maker. Boy, I've heard some fabulous testimonies from people who have been through such pain and yet found healing and comfort in the Lord. People who had not done right and they changed. And they began to reach out to be the one who rescues others that they had never even noticed. This is beautiful!

"It is God who executes vengeance for me, and he'll subdue the people that need to be subdued."

He'll show them they're wrong, bring them down where their efforts and their foolishness no longer has the adverse negative destructive effect.

"He will lift me above those who rise up against me; you will rescue us from the violent."
That's what he wants to do: *"Therefore I will give thanks to you among the nations. In front of the people I will praise you. For he gives great deliverance to his king and shows loving kindness to his anointed, to David,"* and this is David's testimony, *"and his descendants forever."*

I've been praying with our leaders. They really do want what's best for everybody. I promise you they do. Do you realize that --? Don't turn the television or try to find something to throw at me. But there is not any family whose lifestyle or businesses has been affected anymore adversely than our President and his family -- hotels, resorts, all these things. You know I've been around them for four years and not once have they ever mentioned their concern about anything in their life -- never! Not once! Not once!

But they have been deeply concerned about everything affecting everybody else when they see it. And especially in the communities of minorities, and urban communities, and the communities where so much is going on that is so often the heartbreak of what's happened to so many children in Chicago and other areas where so many lives are taken that never make the newspaper. Nobody ever talks about it or the wrongs done. God please! And I've watched our leaders asking God to give them the wisdom and insight to know what to do. Can we all pray that? Pray -- for the deliverer that God offers, the deliverance that he offers, the freedom that only he can give.

Betty, when you listen to me, do I talk to our nation's leaders, do I talk to business leaders, do I talk to church leaders the way that I'm talking to our viewers?

Betty: You do. You are straightforward with them, but you do it in love which makes the difference.

James: Do they listen?

Betty: They listen. They definitely listen.

James: Have you watched it change their lives?

Betty: Absolutely! I can see it change right before you.

James: What do you want our viewers to hear right now in regard to the future of our country and *LIFE Outreach* and all we're doing? What do you want them to know?

Betty: Well, first of all, being a Christian I would want you to know that God has to be first in our personal lives, in our communities, in our world, and our nation before we can get it right. God wants to make things right with us and for us if we'll just be yielded to him. I'm not talking about religion, I'm talking about a relationship with him. We have to start there, right here with self and say God, I commit my whole being to you. Will you take control of my life? Will you take control of my tongue? Will you take control of my anger and my fear and my grumpiness and my not willing to listen or to reason? But just God, change everything about me that is not you.

And then if you allow God to do that, he will step in and he will make the difference. He is just waiting for us. He is saying, "Ask me! Ask me to do what I want to do in you and to come into your life." He can make a difference in our communities, in our nation, in our leadership to where we all want to bless one another. We want to do our best to bless one another and to be a blessing. That is the desire of my heart.

James: A lot of people ask Betty, when you talk to somebody, like if you talk to President Trump or some national leaders, if you talk to Secretary Pompeo or some other leader, do you talk as straight to them as you do to us when you preach? Can you answer that question? Do I?

Betty: Do you? Absolutely!

James: Have you watched their response to what I say?

Betty: I have. I have seen God just touch their hearts as James is speaking many, many times. And like I said, it is not religion, it is about a relationship. God allows him to get to the heart of that person that he's speaking to. And they know first of all that he loves them. He might have to disagree with them, but they know he loves them.

James: Have you seen President Trump listen to straight talk and you've watched him receive it and you've watched it have a positive, transforming effect on him? Have you watched that?

Betty: I really have. You know James, we've had the opportunity, and especially you to be around several of the presidents, and I've had the rare opportunity to be with you with President Trump and he really does listen. He wants to know, he wants to learn because he really does love you. He loves the people. He didn't have to take this big responsibility. Who would want to be president? My goodness, what a job to have the responsibility, James. He had life good but I really believe he had been so blessed in his own life he wanted to see others to succeed in everything life had had for them.

James: With no exaggeration I think we both can tell you, as with all of us, he may miss the mark, we all do, but he wants the very best for all of us, and he really is convinced God does know best. And he does want that revealed to all of us. And he wants all of us as freedom lovers who love faith, family, and freedom, he wants us all to work together for the benefit of every person in this nation, and the good of people all over the world. He wants freedom to prevail and he knows without God it will not. So please pray for him.

Father, thank you for everyone who watches this show. I pray no one is angry with me

for telling them just how determined I am to share your truth with everyone, and how grateful I am for everyone who will listen. Thank you for the viewers of *LIFE Today*. They are amazing expressions of your love. Bless them and bless through them, in Jesus' name.

Betty and I just thank you so much for watching our show. Let me just tell you this right now. We're in our Christmas Shoes and Smiles emphasis. I know it is a long time before Christmas but if we're going to get shoes for little children that most of them have never had shoes -- all over the world, thousands of children, and give them their first pair of shoes or at least the first good shoes they've ever had. We want to send you some beautiful little Christmas ornaments that are shoes. They are so pretty to just say thank you. But we've got to do it now.

And \$36 will give ten pairs of shoes -- ten children a pair of shoes. And so there is a level at which you can come in. I wish if you could give \$180 and just give a bunch of shoes, you would do it -- that would mean so much. And we're going to send you one of the little Christmas shoes as a gift, send you a little box of the shoes for gifts over \$100. I wish if you could do that that you would.

Those of you who watch *LIFE Today*, we can talk to you about what we're praying about because we know you love others. We know you want God's best for everybody. It's certainly what we want. It's what God wants. So let's share his best with some children.

You watch closely and you're going to see something else. We can give smiles for Christmas with cleft palate and facial surgery. We can be the miracle some thought they would never see. You're going to be blessed as you watch this.

On the mission field:

>> The day my child was born I was so very happy. But seeing the shape of my baby's little mouth broke my heart. My child deserves to know love and happiness like anyone

else. But everyone just turns their eyes and looks away. Each day I pray that God will send someone to help us. What's a mother to do?

Announcer: Each day another child already destined to grow up in a developing country is born with yet another challenge from birth to overcome, cleft lip or cleft palate. And the question remains, what's a mother to do? Fortunately, every year at this time, *LIFE Outreach International* and our mission partners around the world seek children who need corrective surgery through our Christmas Shoes and Smiles emphasis. The corrective surgery provides them a gift for a lifetime -- a smile that will last forever.

We also see children smile when they receive shoes to protect their feet from injury and disease. This Christmas season help answer the question of "what's a mother to do" by providing Christmas Shoes and Smiles to children in need.

End of video

In the studio:

James: I have to smile! I cannot look at that and not smile. Look at me just a moment right here. I'm glad I can smile. And I've seen so many of those little children. I remember seeing a little boy in Angola. It was like he'd never seen his face clearly in a mirror even. And we showed him a playback; we were talking to him and we showed him on a monitor. And when he saw himself, he threw his little hands over his face and screamed and ran.

And did you know that in love, when I showed that response to people here in the United States and around the world, did you know the viewers said, "We're going to give that little boy a new smile." And we had to literally, and you gave it, the money to take him from Angola to Johannesburg where we could get the surgeon capable and your love gave that little boy a smile. He didn't have to run from his own face.

Father, I pray for every mother, every father who has ever looked at a little child and wished they could smile -- and that little child wished they could; sometimes they can't even eat properly. They have such a tough challenge. Would you give us lots of smiles? In Jesus' name.

I hope every time you watch me and Betty on *LIFE Today*, I may say some corrective words, hopefully, in obvious unconditional love, but I hope we make you smile. Because you sure have made a lot of mothers and fathers smile when you saved their children, you saved their families and you gave them a future.

Right now we can give some children shoes for Christmas. This is not a life or death thing. Well, for some because they get infections and hookworms and that can take their life. So it can be life or death, but basically, it is just joy. It is just showing them you notice. But these surgeries, I can tell you right now, Betty and I know you're for this, I don't have to ask permission but we're going to write a \$1,000 check today. As soon as we leave here, we're going to leave \$1,000 for these smiles.

And then we'll be giving shoes too, a bunch of them because we do every year. That's why we've got so many of these beautiful little shoe ornaments hanging on the tree. They're just everywhere. Betty just loves them! Our family loves them; our children, our grandchildren do. Would you make the best gift you can today? \$36 will give ten pairs of shoes. And Betty and I are going to give that \$1,000 right now, and that's two surgeries.

Go online or call that number and take your bankcard and use it like a check and make the greatest gift you possibly can. Give some smiles! If you can give \$1,000 or more, I believe you will, and I believe there will be a smile on your face when you do it either online or calling in. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE*; put it in the mail. But call us and tell us you're mailing it because we need to know if we're going to be able to get all these shoes and how many surgeries we're able to provide. Thank you so much!

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 will help secure and make ready 150,000 Christmas shoes to be shipped and delivered to 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.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request this beautifully crafted blue 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 all *LIFE's* Christmas shoe ornaments.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft lip or palate surgeries. And you may request the beautiful "A Mother's Strength" bronze sculpture.

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

End of video**In the studio:**

James: Well, I'm excited. I just believe we're going to give lots of shoes and you're going to love these. Betty and I are going to give that \$1,000 right now and that's two surgeries -- two smiles. My goodness! Can you do that? I tell you what, I bet if you can

do more you will. Let's pray for our leaders. Let's pray we make the right decisions and we see everyone blessed. So America cannot only be blessed by God, but we bless God. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Thank all of you for your love. Thanks for watching.