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Week 40: Christmas Shoes and Smiles, last week

James and Betty Robison

Robert Jeffress #1

JAMES: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I was just telling our guest—and you're going to be glad Dr. Robert Jeffress is here, First Baptist Dallas. I was telling him that I get so excited—by the way, Betty is here. [Laughing] He's just celebrated an anniversary, and Betty and I will celebrate, next year our 60th wedding anniversary and ministry. But I was telling Dr. Jeffress that I get excited talking to you. And I want you to keep your seatbelt buckled tight because Dr. Jeffress is going to talk about *18 Minutes With Jesus*. When you find out where this “18 minutes” came from and what it covers, then what he covers in the book, it's going to bless you beyond imagination. And I think you already know that because the way our viewers zero in every time Dr. Jeffress is on here. I know how much you love Jesus; and you love him because he magnifies Jesus.

But you do, too. Betty, these people—and you're going to see because you're going to see what we do this time of the year. And when I say “we” that encompasses the big we, us together, you, you amaze us with the love of God that flows so freely and so effectively through you. Well, Dr. Jeffress, you can tell I love those folks. And those viewers love you.

DR. JEFFRESS: Well, thank you!

JAMES: I love you. I'm glad you're here.

DR. JEFFRESS: Well, we love you all and have been friends and partners in ministry

for many, many years. And to see God blessing you as a couple for 60 years, that's phenomenal—phenomenal!

JAMES: And you started hearing me when you were a teenager, even under the teen years, at First Baptist. I've got to believe a few mercy-drops fell on you.

DR. JEFFRESS: [Laughing] Oh I think a shower fell!

JAMES: Okay. Let's cut to the chase. Now just go ahead and tell us how this was birthed. Because it's kind of interesting; it actually came from, I guess, another writer that somehow got your attention in this area, but then this captured you. Tell us about it.

DR. JEFFRESS: Yeah, people wonder about that title, *18 Minutes with Jesus*. The way we came up with that title was one of the popular things in our culture right now is what is called Ted Talks. Somebody who is an expert in a certain field will give a talk and it has to be on a fascinating topic, it has to be cross-cultural, it has to be timeless, and it can't be more than 18 minutes in length.

I thought to myself, what if Jesus Christ came back to earth and was asked to give a Ted Talk, what would he talk about? What's he an expert in? And the answer came, he's already given the Ted Talk. It's called the Sermon on the Mount. You can read the Sermon on the Mount in 18 minutes. It is not a long sermon, but it is the most impactful sermon that anyone has ever preached.

Just think about it. What would Jesus talk about if he sat across the table and had a cup of coffee with you? What would he talk about for 18 minutes? Well, I think we've got the answer in the Sermon on the Mount. The subtitle of the book—

JAMES: He actually sat down on a rock and started. We don't know if he was standing but we know it wasn't just the 12 at the end because—

DR. JEFFRESS: That's right! He had attracted a crowd!

JAMES: Oh, my goodness! But imagine, 18 minutes all he covered!

DR. JEFFRESS: And he covered a lot of things, James and Betty. He covered in the subtitle of the book is: "Straight talk from the Savior about the things that matter most." I think if Jesus came back right now, he would talk about the things we're interested in, which happen to be the things he's interested in.

In this sermon, you find straight talk about your faith. What are you supposed to do in society? We'll get into that. What's our role here? Straight talk about your money. Straight talk about your sex life. Straight talk about your prayer life. He hits all the topics that we're interested in. And everything he says is revolutionary. It is completely different from the world's value system. I think this Sermon on the Mount is something we need to be reminded of today because it tells us not just how to live in the hereafter but how we are to live in the here and now.

JAMES: Well, you know you and I have been talking the last several times we're together, and then when we are talking to church leaders and business leaders, and also national leaders, we always talk about what makes a difference in his kingdom and living with kingdom purpose since that's why he left us here is to fulfill his kingdom purpose on this earth.

Let me do this. Let me read the chapter titles. Now just listen. Here they are: "Straight talk about your happiness." Wow! "Straight talk about your faith." "Straight talk about your relationships." Boy, I'm telling you what, this is important stuff. "Straight talk about your sex life." "Straight talk about your adversaries." It appears today we seem to have more than we've ever had, especially if you're people of faith. Would you agree? If you really believe in God.

DR. JEFFRESS: And the world's value system says annihilate your enemy. God says

pray for your enemies. We'll get into that.

JAMES: Buddy, can he get into it! You talk about a gift from God that's been highly developed because he loves God, Dr. Jeffress, and he loves you. Because of the Jesus that loves you so much and the God that loves you so much lives in him. That's why he is going to bless you. "Straight talk about your church." "Straight talk about your prayer life." "Straight talk about your money." "Straight talk about your needs." "Straight talk about your eternal destiny."

I want you to take off on some of these. But I wanted you to know because we're going to offer you the book. You can go online and get it. You don't have to wait until you get it, and we send it to you, but we're going to offer it to you. Because we so believe in what God put in his heart and what he puts in a book, we want to put it in your hand because it is going straight to your heart. Take off on some of this.

DR. JEFFRESS: You know, and thank you for saying that, James and Betty. You know, one of the great misconceptions about the Sermon on the Mount, I want to be honest with our audience, some of you are tempted to yawn right now and say the Sermon on the Mount? Oh, my gosh! What can be more boring than that? I think a lot of people feel that way because they've been led to believe, first of all, that it is a checklist on how to get to heaven; if you do all these things you can get into heaven. Well, Jesus in the sermon himself said that's impossible. You have to be perfect to get into the kingdom and nobody can be perfect without the forgiveness of Christ. It is not a checklist to get into heaven.

Other people think, and I actually heard this in seminary. When I was in seminary, I heard oh, the Sermon on the Mount is not meant for today! It is the constitution for the kingdom of God, of how we're going to live in heaven forever. Well, if that's true, then it is totally irrelevant for today. But that's not true. The Sermon on the Mount is how we're to live as believers in this world right now.

And my theme throughout this book is simply this, those who model their actions,

attitudes, and affections after Jesus Christ will experience genuine joy in this life and unending happiness for the next life. This is for the here and now.

And again, a lot of the topics that we talk about are related but counterintuitive to how we should live. You know one of the things we talk about is how to respond to your enemies. Jesus said, "You've heard it said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'" You know the problem with an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is eventually, everybody ends up blind and toothless. I mean there's got to be a way out of that. Jesus said here's the way to handle your enemies, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. You know if somebody slaps you on the cheek turn the other cheek. That is unheard of in today's world of annihilation of your enemies, even among Christians, and yet it is the only way to settle a dispute.

You know I'll tell you an interesting story. You'll appreciate this. We have a mutual friend in the former President and when he went through his first impeachment trial, that evening he invited me to attend a little dinner up there with some senators, both Democrats and Republicans. We were sitting around the dinner table, he had just been acquitted and we were talking about those who had tried to impeach him. One of the senators said, "Now, Mr. President, remember the Bible says, 'Love your enemies.'"

He said, "Hmm, Robert what do you think about that? Do you think I'm supposed to love my enemies?"

I said, "Well, that's what the Bible says. But to love your enemies doesn't mean you hang out with them. It means you want the best for them. You pray for God's best in their life."

And that's what Jesus is talking about. When somebody wrongs you, it doesn't mean you're going to be their best friend forever and ever, but you pray that God's will would be done in their life and that they might come to repentance.

BETTY: And that can be a real challenge, especially today. Because even as Christians,

we will stay stirred up and angry sometimes with what we see going on.

DR. JEFFRESS: That's right. Even when some of the things going on in the news as we tape this program right now, there's an anger that builds up. That's not right. But we've got to be careful that justified anger doesn't turn into destructive bitterness. You know Hebrews 12:15 says: Be careful, see to it that no root of bitterness springs up in your life and destroys many.

You know in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "If you forgive others God will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others neither will my Heavenly Father forgive you." I've heard people try to explain that away. Well, what Jesus meant was blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. What Jesus meant was what he said. He wasn't saying you earn salvation by forgiving other people. He wasn't saying that you lose your salvation by not forgiving. What Jesus is saying is simply this, if you repeatedly say I will not forgive, I will not forgive, I cannot forgive. I've heard that so many times. If you say that, it doesn't mean you've lost forgiveness, it means you never had it to begin with.

JAMES: It means you're going to defile many people too. Just think about it, Jesus did forgive people that he says didn't know what they were doing. And we would say, well, they knew exactly what they were doing. They put the spear, they stripped him, they scourged him, they put those spikes right where they wanted them. No, he said they didn't know. What he said is they're under the control of another force. They don't even realize what's holding them.

The things that disturb us right now in our country that are being done, that are endorsing lawlessness, encouraging lawlessness, making lawful the unlawful and the lawless, it is very disturbing to us. But the fact is they're under the control of the lawbreaker and the liar and the father of all lies, and the division and destruction and death. And so you have to understand there's a force controlling them, and we mustn't let that force control us, we must let the God force that Jesus talks about in these 18 minutes and throughout everything he said which is love.

This is the thing I wish everybody would get. Because see, we know some people are in a real mess right now. One of them is a guy named Saul of Tarsus. He was in a real mess, and he sees Stephen being unjustly stoned to death. And what does Stephen do? He prays like Jesus, "Lay not this sin to their charge." And the Saul of Tarsus denying Jesus saw Jesus in dying Stephen, living Jesus, and he was converted by that living Jesus. That's what you're saying.

When we do what Jesus says and we learn to pray for our enemies and pray for the people who are defeated, who are under the control of this demonic force, this destructive force, we can see everything turn as surely as it did with Saul of Tarsus, with Augustine, with many ultimate church leaders, they were changed. We've seen God change national leaders, including the man you mentioned. We didn't ever want to be around him, but God said to love him, and love can have an effect on him. And it did. Now love is not finished with him. Love is not finished with any of us. That's what Jesus says. But love never fails. We just don't put it in action as often as we should and that's what you're talking about in this book.

DR. JEFFRESS: That's right! And you know, the thing I want people to understand is, his Sermon on the Mount, when we live that way, we experience the benefits of that right now. We don't have to wait until we go to heaven to experience the benefits of obeying God.

Right here in this TV studio, 10 or 12 years ago, I met one of my heroes of the faith, Dallas Willard. And we were here for a meeting with you. Dallas Willard is the first person who introduced me to this idea of the kingdom of God is now. The kingdom of God is wherever God rules. It is wherever what the king wants done gets done. And the kingdom of God is coming one day in a literal form but right now it resides in the hearts of those who follow God. And if you follow the things in this book, which are based on what Jesus said, you don't have to wait for heaven to experience the benefits of heaven. You can experience joy and happiness right now. I'm not saying you're going to have

freedom from problems. You're going to have problems but there is that inner joy, that assurance that God is at work and taking care of your situation. And that's why it is so important we spend these 18 minutes with Jesus.

JAMES: Well, the thing about it is, if you're going to be an overcomer, there is something you must overcome. And it is the intention of the enemy to prevail over us. And Jesus said the gates of hell are not to be allowed to prevail over the effect of the church, which means as a family of God we can live like the family of God and not be defeated by the father of lies. We don't have to be dissentious and divided.

You and I have watched a miracle occur in our day that I think is big to God. We are seeing pastors and church leaders come together and not only learn to love each other but learn to like each other when they know they disagree in some areas that they consider important. But love is bigger than that and it brings us together to where we're like a family with some distinct differences and differences of opinions, but love prevails.

I believe that's what birthed this nation. Very different, diverse, potentially very let's say capable of debating 'til hell froze over but they didn't. They came together for a greater purpose and look what came out of that meeting! Do you believe that if church leaders and Christians would come together in supernatural unity, not sameness, he didn't make us the same, he made us distinctly different like all the members of the body but when we fit together it is amazing. Don't you think if church people and Christian people would begin to behave like the family of the perfect Father it would make a dynamic impact on this world that is groping in darkness right now?

DR. JEFFRESS: I believe that and more importantly, Jesus believed that. Because he said, "They will know you are my disciples by your love, one for another." There is no organization in the world like the church where you have people from all races, all ethnicities, all economic backgrounds, all educational levels, all coming together in a common bond in Jesus Christ. Not uniformity but unity. And that unity is what is the most powerful witness to an unbelieving world that Christ is real.

JAMES: I've been preaching in your church, First Baptist since I was 23 years old. That's a long time ago because I'm soon going to be 80. So I've been preaching there a long time. And you know I've watched a lot of great things happen there. And you heard me preaching there when you were very young. We saw some great things happen. I had the first Saturday night service in the history of the church and it was packed. Dr. Criswell didn't think anybody would come but it was overflowing.

But anyway, the point is, that I've seen God do so much there. But I'm going to tell you something, I've never heard the church adorned in greater glory than I'm watching right now. And you've had some great pastors in your church. I am watching people enjoy that choir, I'm watching that choir magnify the Lord, I'm watching all the musicians, I'm watching people who go to downtown Dallas, it is not like you just took a little walk up the street or around the corner, and they go and they come together in the presence of the Lord. And then they listen to you stand up there and preach. You sit in this chair and start preaching and everybody watching knows, that man is telling us the truth. And you captivate people.

Not every preacher that comes and sits here captivates everybody. Not every preacher does. You do. Your church has followed not just your leadership but God's leadership through you, and they have become more like Jesus because of it. You have had an impact on the—listen to me when I say you, your pastor because of you, the church family there at First Baptist, you have allowed your pastor to touch people that some preachers have been told don't you ever get around those people. Don't you ever be seen with those people. Stop the nonsense. Jesus sat on a Pharisee's sofa, and he wasn't really high on Pharisees, with a prostitute at his feet, and he had one of the greatest outpourings of supernatural power in the history of the world—with a Pharisee and a prostitute. That wasn't good for his reputation, was it?

But here's the deal, your church is having an effect like that, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. And I want everybody to get this book. Now let me just say this

to you. You're going to come back for another program because we've got a lot more to touch on. And you know, I can't get around you and not preach. You inspire preaching in me.

DR. JEFFRESS: You preach, and I'll take up the offering.

JAMES: Go for it, buddy! Now listen to me. We're going to send you this book if you'd like to have it. Do you know what we're going to ask our viewers to do? We're going to ask you to give a little child a shoe that will last a long time that one of our viewers came to us and said I can get these shoes. They're just like expensive shoes you have to pay a lot for. I know how to get them very inexpensively and we could give them to children all over the world for Christmas. Would you do it?

And we ask you, Dr. Jeffress, they're doing it. We're going to give 150,000 kids shoes this Christmas, but we have to start right now. So I want you to watch this. You're going to see some people you know who are sitting with some people you don't know. And you're going to show those people how much God loves them because God loves through you. Watch closely.

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 old 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.

SHEILA: This really is a gift of life as much as anything else. So let's try these, buddy. Let's see how they go. This so reminds me of like Christmas morning in our house. They're like showing each other their shoes. They're excited! Because they look so cool. Something as simple as a pair of shoes can really change a child's life.

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

SHEILA: Because of your gift, we're able to put shoes on her feet. Now she'll be able to run around and be safe!

[Laughter]

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Well, I just can't do anything but sit here and smile. You may not know it but you saw some very well-known Christians there. You saw Lisa Bevere. You saw Tammy Trent, a great singer, a great writer. You saw Betty. You saw our grandson Luke just briefly. And you saw Sheila Walsh. You say what are these people doing going all over the world? It is the love of God that carries them there. It's the love Jesus talked about, by

the way, in the Sermon on the Mount. It's the love that you who watch *Life Today* show and share every day all over the world.

We need a miracle right now. There are two things. We need your help to give 150,000 children shoes. Lord, I pray we'll give more than that. I pray people will say let's do more than that! Okay, let's do it. Would you do this?

Did you know that you can give ten pairs of shoes for \$36? Did you know that you can do something else, too? We're giving cleft palate surgery this time of the year. And Betty, the surgeons go, and they give their time and their skill. And it costs \$500 with what the cost, the bare cost is for them to do it. Basically, their services are free. That's the cost of everything involved for them.

Would you give, could you possibly, we've already given 2,000 children a smile, the ability to nurse, to eat. And if we can get them when they're babies because they can't nurse with cleft palate, if we will do all these things right now it will be a miracle Christmas. We can give *Shoes and Smiles*. It is the last week now. Could you give \$1,000 or more and give smiles? Could you give that many pairs of shoes that a \$1,000 would buy? Would you give ten children shoes?

Father, help every person right now to go and get their bank card and use it like a check. Go online or call the number and make the gift you put in their heart. In Jesus' name.

We're going to send you some beautiful little shoes that you can hang on the Christmas tree. As a matter of fact, we'll send you a whole set of them, several of them if you'll give over \$100. And you'll get this one that we're giving for any gift. But you're giving the greatest gift, you're giving the love of God in demonstration form.

Betty, don't you love to watch those children?

BETTY: There is nothing like it! To see them jumping around and smiling because

they've got shoes on their feet so they can run and play. But the favorite thing for me is to give a baby a smile because there is nothing like the smile of a baby. It just lights up your heart, and makes your day. I know it does mine.

So thank you for everything that you can do to help these precious little ones.

JAMES: I hope they'll let you just see those little lips and a little child wanting to be able to smile. You can give them a smile. I pray we see a miracle. I pray you become that miracle. You can be someone's miracle. You can be an answer to prayer. Thanks for doing it! Thank you!

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 diseases that could lead to crippling consequences -- and even death.

By responding today, you will help secure and make ready 150,000 pairs of 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 beautiful crafted red crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake boxed set featuring four of *LIFE's* crystal 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 lip or palate surgeries. And you may request a beautiful bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come!"

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: I do want to remind you this is the last week! And you know, I made a pretty clear appeal. Would you please, you may have given a gift already, Betty and I will invariably, and I'll tell you what, Betty, let's send another gift in this week. You may want to make a second one. This is the last week.

We'll gladly send you Dr. Jeffress's book, *18 Minutes With Jesus*. I'll tell you what, this can change your whole life. Doc, we're going to talk to you again later this week. We love you and thank you for being here.

DR. JEFFRESS: Thanks for having me. Great to be with you always!

JAMES: Thanks so much for letting Jesus be who he is through you. Wow!