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**Week 36: *Christmas Shoes and Smiles***

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Rabbi Jason Sobel #1**

**Studio discussion:**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*. This is a little show where we like to talk about Jesus and the Bible and dig deep. Tammy, I'm excited today because we have Rabbi Jason Sobel back with us who has been so fabulous. And he's got a book called *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah*. Did you know there are secrets?

**TAMMY:** I did not know there are secrets.

**RANDY:** I don't know what they are.

**TAMMY:** I don't know what they are either. We're going to find out today.

**RANDY:** Will they be secrets when we're done?

**TAMMY:** They will no longer be secrets. But you know Randy, I have never met a rabbi.

**RANDY:** Oh! Well, would you meet Rabbi Jason Sobel?

**TAMMY:** Yes! It's nice to meet you.

**RABBI SOBEL:** Shalom! It's great to be with you all.

**RANDY:** Great to have you back. We always learn so much when you sit down with us because of your understanding of the culture, the language, just the context of scripture. I

do have to ask you about the secrets though because when I saw the title, I went, secrets? I thought Jesus came to be known! What are you referring to in that?

**RABBI SOBEL:** Yeah, the Bible talks about mysteries or secrets which are things that were hidden that he comes to make known or to reveal. One of the things that we do inside of the secrets, just like we've done with *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi*, and *Mysteries* is that when people read the Bible, there are these little details that are there that they oftentimes just gloss over. But there are deeper truths to be revealed in them and that's what we're doing in the book.

Like why does he do the miracle with six stone pots? Why on the third day? Why all these things? These are secrets or mysteries that God wants to make known to us through the text.

**RANDY:** Well, let's get into it. I'm curious because the first miracle that Jesus did always—I kind of wondered, especially in my Baptist church where Jesus turned the wine into grape—or the water into grape juice, what was going on there? What do you see in that miracle?

**RABBI SOBEL:** Yeah, of course. In the book, we talk about this being the miracle of transformation. He takes water, which is ordinary, and he turns it into wine which is something extraordinary. And that's exactly what he wants to do in our life. When he touches us, we go from ordinary to extraordinary.

But there is something deeper here. The question is why is the first miracle—of all the miracles that he could have performed, why is the first miracle turning water into wine? Well, think about it for a moment. One of the things that the Bible and the book of John, in particular, are trying to do is to show Jesus as the greater than Moses. So the Bible says Deuteronomy 18:18, a Messianic prophecy: I'll raise up a prophet like Moses from your midst. What is the first miracle Moses does when he comes to redeem the children of Israel out of Egypt? He turns the water into blood.

But Jesus doesn't come to bring death he comes to bring life that we might have it more abundantly. So he turns the water into wine saying, "Fill it to the brim." Saying I'm the greater than Moses, I'm the promise of the Messiah who comes to bring the transformation, who comes to bring the overflow in your life.

Even there in John, you think about why wine? Wine is in the Bible one of the greatest pictures of the Messianic kingdom. Genesis 49, Jacob blesses his children, one of the key Messianic prophecies, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah. No other rule or staff between his feet until Shiloh comes," which means until the Messiah comes. "To him will be the obedience of the nations. They'll tie the donkey to the choicest grapevine, they'll wash their garments in the blood of grapes."

That wine is going to be so abundant in the kingdom, it's going to be like water. You're going to be able to wash your clothes in it. Amos nine says: "The mountains will drip with sweet wine." Every biblical occasion is celebrated with wine because wine is symbolic of the Messianic kingdom. It goes through the crushing, it goes through the pressing, but then creates something so much better—and it only gets better with time. And that's what God wants to do in our lives.

**RANDY:** You mentioned stone pots. Is there a significance?

**RABBI SOBEL:** Yeah! Yeah! There are a number of things. One, he does the miracle with six stone pots. What's interesting also, there's a little detail in the Exodus account where he turns the water into blood, which says even the water in the stone basins of the Egyptians turned to blood. So here he's using stone pots. But the more important thing is the number six. If there is a detail in the Bible, it's there for a reason. God does not waste words. If there is a detail in inspired scripture, it's there for a reason.

So think about it for a moment. Why six stone pots? Man was created on the sixth day. In Jewish thought, he fell on the sixth day. So when the Messiah comes, he comes to restore

everything that is lost. So he does the miracle of the water into wine with six stone pots; he is restoring the fruitfulness of the Garden of Eden that was lost in the beginning. The rabbis say in the Messianic kingdom we're going to drink the wine at the marriage supper of the Lamb that was reserved for us from the six days of creation. As an aside, he does the miracle at a wedding. Why? Because it's a sneak preview of the marriage supper of the Lamb, the wedding of the bride to Jesus the bridegroom. In heaven, there is a lot more depth there that we could go into.

But think about it. When Jesus dies, he dies on Good Friday, which is what day of the week on the biblical calendar? The sixth day. He dies on the sixth day. He does the miracle on the sixth day because six in the Bible is a number of correction. When we sin, we broke the connection between heaven and earth. When he comes, he comes to restore the connection between heaven and earth. When that connection is restored, it leads to fruitfulness, it leads to overflow, it leads to blessing, it leads to the abundant life.

**TAMMY:** I'm sitting here going, my mind is blown! Like I've been a follower of Christ my whole life but when I sit here in your presence I feel like—like there is so much to unpack that I don't have any clue about. And it makes me kind of weepy because I think there is so much to know about Messiah. But I feel overwhelmed when I listen to this. I don't know if anybody else feels like that.

**RANDY:** It is because I think we're 2,000 years later, we're Gentiles, you know? We don't understand the culture of the times. Did the Israelites, the Jews of the day, did they see all the significance in this?

**RABBI SOBEL:** Yeah. I think they saw a lot of the significance. For example, they would have understood the number six. And they would have understood that he did the miracle on the third day. Why is that important? Because Jewish weddings typically take place on the third day. Because it is the day—it is the only day in creation that God blesses twice.

The third day is the day that Abraham offers Isaac. And he looked up, Genesis 22, on the third day and saw the mountain from a distance. It was on the third day that Isaac came off the altar and the lamb was offered in his place. So it is pointing to Jesus as the fulfillment of what was seen in Abraham, "Take your son, your only begotten son," with the story of the binding of Isaac.

The third day is the day that God comes down on Mount Sinai and reveals his glory to the people. And John says, by this first miracle that happened on the third day, the book of John tells us, Jesus revealed his glory—a greater glory that was revealed on Mount Sinai.

And so, I think Jews would read that and they would understand that. They would see it in the details. But this is also what Jesus is doing on the road to Emmaus. He was opening the scriptures and showing how everything in the Torah, the law, the writings, and the prophets point to him. I think when we talk about secrets, I think this is kind of what we're talking about.

It says in the scriptures it is God's prerogative to conceal a matter but it is the glory of kings to search it out. I think when we—part of our royal identity as sons and daughters is to seek out the deeper things of scripture because scripture is like the ocean. It is so shallow that a child can enjoy it but it is so deep you can never go to the depths of it. That's the beauty of God's Word. That's the reason why it's never boring to go to the scripture because there is always something more that God wants to show us or something more God wants to say that speaks to our life and our situation.

**RANDY:** So you mentioned the third day, and I think most of us today, we think okay, that's the resurrection.

**RABBI SOBEL:** Of course, that too.

**RANDY:** So in doing this was he also looking forward?

**RABBI SOBEL:** Absolutely! Absolutely! Because there is another Messianic prophecy from the book of Hosea. It says: "Two days he has torn us. But on the third day, he will heal us and restore us to life." So the third day is a day of restoration. He's restoring what was lost in the Garden of Eden. He was restoring the blessing. It is the day of resurrection. Isaac comes off the altar, in a sense figuratively speaking, Hebrews tells us, like he figuratively received him back from the dead on the third day. And obviously, Jesus rises on the third day. So these things are all a sneak preview of ultimately, his death and resurrection and ultimately, the kingdom of God and the marriage supper of the Lamb and all these things that we have to look forward to.

And there is a promise in all these miracles, right? These are not just things that God has done in the past. But what God does in the past is what he wants to do for us in the present. So it is interesting. The miracles in the New Testament are not called miracles in the book of John, they're called signs. That's why the book is *Signs and Secrets* because he did these signs.

But these signs were meant to be a testimony, which interesting, is that the Hebrew word for testimony is the word *edut* and it comes from two letters, *ayin* and *dalet*. So the root word for testimony is witness, *ed*, is the same word in Hebrew which means again. What's the point? A testimony is something that God wants to do again and again and again in our life.

So these things are written, these miracles are written, these miracles were given because God is saying, what I did for them, I want to do for you because I'm the same yesterday, today, and forever. And so this first miracle that we're talking about, this miracle of transformation of ordinary to extraordinary of new creation, that's what God wants to do in our life, that's the promise. The old has passed away and the new has come and in him we're a new creation.

**RANDY:** I'm curious about the whole cast your net over here, not over here. I mean, that one I always thought that's kind of funny. There's got to be more going on there than I

understand.

**RABBI SOBEL:** Yeah! There is more to the story. There is something. So John 21, the disciples are fishing all night. We talk about this in *Signs and Secrets*, and they catch nothing. So the first thing is, why did they catch nothing? The interesting thing is that the word for fish in Hebrew, *dag*, has the same root as the word for worry, fear, and anxiety. When you fish from a place of worry, fear, and anxiety, when you live from a place of fear, your nets are going to be left to you empty, your relationships are going to be empty. And so God doesn't want us to live from a place of fear, he wants us to move to a place of faith.

So the disciples, think about it, Peter says to the disciples, "Let's go fishing." He had denied the Lord. He probably was living from a place of worry and anxiety. Certainly, I'm not going to be the rock. I'm not going to be the one the Lord uses. I just denied him three times. So I might as well go back to my old profession, what I know, what I've been good at in the past because I'm done for. Right? He's living from a place of worry, fear, and anxiety. His nets are left empty.

Then Yeshua says, okay, the nets are empty but then he says, "Cast the nets on the right side of the boat." So here's the point. From a Jewish perspective, if you're living from the left your nets are going to be left to you empty. It is not a political statement. [Laughing]

**RANDY:** Well, I would disagree.

**RABBI SOBEL:** So the place of the left is in Jewish thought, the place of fire, it is a place of severity. When you live from the left of severity and harshness and fire, your nets are going to be left to you empty. The right side is the place of love. It is the side of *cheched*, God's lovingkindness. It is the side of water. It is the side of the word. When we live from the right, that's when we experience the blessings of God in our lives.

And I believe we are in a John 21 moment. I believe we're living in a moment in history

where the greatest catch the world has ever known is coming. But we need to live from the right and not to the left. God spoke to me supernaturally one time and he said, Jason, the greatest revival the world has ever known is coming. It is not rooted in fear but it is rooted in love. It is rooted in love and miracles of healing and wholeness that I want to do in people's lives.

So they cast the net on the right side of the boat. The interesting thing is, we said it is the side associated with water. The right side is associated with water. Water in Hebrew is the letter *mayim*. The Hebrew letter *mayim* has a numerical value of 13. So this miracle is connected to the number 13. Why is that important? Love in Hebrew equals 13. Oneness *ahavah*, love equals 13. *Echad*, to be one, equals 13. How the great catch comes is when we are united as one, 13, in love, 13. By our love and by their unity that's how the world will know us. It ties back to John 17. He prays that these and those will be one as he and the father are one. Then you will be perfected in unity and the world will know the Father sent me. The world will not be W-O-N until we are O-N-E in Messiah. The world will not be won until we are one in love in Messiah. And that's cast the nets on the right side of the boat.

**RANDY:** I love it. All right 13 is my new lucky number.

**TAMMY:** Oh, I'll take it all.

**RANDY:** It is interesting, a couple of things. The signs are not the thing. They point to the thing. Right? If you're going to somewhere and you see a sign that says "Los Angeles, 268 miles," you have not arrived. But you're on the right path. And so, I love how all of these things are pointing to the Messiah.

One note though, in both of those miracles there is a component of believing what Jesus said and then acting on it.

**RABBI SOBEL:** Exactly! Yeah!



**RANDY:** How critical is it that we not just read these nice stories or discover these nice deeper things but act on it?

**RABBI SOBEL:** Absolutely. I think one of the interesting things, for example, with the miracle of the water into wine in John chapter two, the miracle doesn't happen until everything runs out. That's important to understand. It is not until we come to an end of ourselves that God begins.

So I say that because the hardest time to have faith and to take action is when it seems like everything has run out when there is nothing left. But then Yeshua-Jesus tells Mary, "Tell the servants to fill the pots to the brim with water." They had to take a step of faith and fill the pots. They had to take the step of faith and draw the water. One of the beautiful things about Mary is she had such faith and obedience that she wasn't going to take no for an answer. Jesus is like, "Okay, mom. What does this have to do with me? It's not my time." She has such faith that she moves him to take action. But then she has to take action, the servants have to take action and that was a key component. Obedience leads to blessing. We have to step out in faith and take a risk because faith is spelled R-I-S-K. Unless we're willing to risk, we're not going to see God move in a supernatural-type way. So God honors that step of faith and that risk.

**RANDY:** It's interesting that there is the belief, and then the obedience, then the miracle. I think Tammy, so many times we want to skip to the miracle but we've got to go through the belief. And we have to go through obedience. And that's what we've seen as we've been all around the world and seen these beautiful things happen where there is great need. Because people watch, they believe, they hear the voice of God, they obey and they act.

**TAMMY:** That's right. They respond—respond in faith. What a difference you make. We're so glad you're watching today. I want to show you something right now that I think is going to challenge you and bless your life.

**Transition roll-in: [A Doctor's Appeal]**

**ANNOUNCER:** *Every year in developing countries around the world, more than 170,000 children are born with a cleft lip or cleft palate. Without surgical repair, a cleft lip or palate could be deadly for a child.*

**DR. HODGES:** As a child grows with a cleft palate, they will not be able to breastfeed and that can cause real problems for nutrition. And it can also cause them to have more commonly, chest infections, and that could even lead to death.

**ANNOUNCER:** *Beyond just the physical dangers, the cleft lip or palate can cause lasting emotional and psychological damage to a child.*

**DR. HODGES:** Then, as they start to talk, they will not be able to be understood. Cleft palate makes their speech very, very difficult to understand. And so combining the appearance and also the speech will have a huge impact on how that child feels about themselves as they grow up.

**ANNOUNCER:** *Fortunately, a cleft lip or a cleft palate can be repaired fairly easily with corrective surgery. But a child living in poverty has very little hope and even fewer options for this type of surgery.*

*That's why LIFE Outreach and its partners have already provided more than 2,000 life-changing surgeries at no cost to the families. And this year, we will continue to do as many surgical cleft repairs as possible around the world.*

**DR. HODGES:** Thanks to partners like *LIFE Outreach International*, we're able to make lasting changes in children's lives through corrective surgery. Just to give an example from the clinic this week, I saw several children that we've operated on their lips and their palates, very young, and the children are healthy, they look normal, and I know that they

will now be able to speak normally as well.

But there is so much more work to be done. Literally, thousands of families are waiting for help, but we can only do it with your continuing support. God bless you.

**Studio appeal:**

**RANDY:** I love Dr. Hodges' commitment there. And you can see the results. I mean, this is a beautiful opportunity to change a child's life, improve their health, and express the love of God in the process. Tammy, this is one of the—this is just fun to be an expression of God's love to people but the physical change we see is amazing.

**TAMMY:** It is enormous! Some of those pictures we just saw, it's like—and for only \$500, Randy? We can help make that change for these little ones that will change their entire future. When I think about Christmas, I'd rather say don't give me a gift. I don't need a gift. Give it to the ministry. Let's change the life of one little child at a time. And Dr. Andrew was doing like seven in a day. So he's there. He's set up. He knows what he is doing. He does this all the time. They just need the funds. So if God has laid it on your heart to put a smile on the face of a little girl or little boy today, then please, make that call.

Go online, make the call to us, and let us know so we can count on you and let the doctors know that we're on our way.

**RANDY:** There is something that I found out recently on one of our trips overseas. In many of the countries where we do these surgeries, I don't know if you know this, they believe that a child born with a cleft lip or cleft palate is a curse from God.

**TAMMY:** Oh, my goodness, Randy!

**RANDY:** Have you heard that?

**TAMMY:** I have heard that and it breaks my heart.

**RANDY:** It does break my heart. But you know what? We break the curse because not only do we fix the cleft lip or cleft palate but we do it in the name of Jesus. We tell them no! You're not cursed. You were born to be blessed. We tell the children that, and we tell the parents that. And it's not just changing someone's physical appearance, this is changing hearts and minds. So when we share the joy of Christmas, we're also sharing the joy of Christ.

Now many of you are saying, oh boy, I wish I could provide a surgery but I can't. Well, there is another part of the Shoes and Smiles campaign and these are the shoes. A simple pair of shoes that we put on children's feet that protects them from the harsh environments where they live. For many of these children, it is the first time they've ever owned a pair of shoes. And the durability of these things, Tammy, you know we've been doing this for years, the durability of these and the nature of children is most of them outgrow them before they're done with them and they pass them on.

**TAMMY:** I know! I've seen it.

**RANDY:** We say \$36 will provide shoes for ten children, which is true but it may be an 11th child when they hand it down. It may be 20, and so much more!

**TAMMY:** And they last! When I was in Central America we saw children—

**RANDY:** You still saw them.

**TAMMY:** Yes! We saw them all over the place.

**RANDY:** I love it. So whatever you can do. Maybe you could give shoes for 20 children for a gift of \$72 or 50 children for \$180. There is a level you can come in. Go online, go

to the phone, let's give shoes, let's give smiles, let's give the joy of Christ to so many people this Christmas season. So please, if it is on your heart, act now.

**CS&S Cause 2025:**

***ANNOUNCER:** Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer not only from lack of food and clean water, but also from a lack of things we take for granted, such as a healthy smile or a protective pair of shoes.*

*Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of painful infections, injury, and life-threatening diseases.*

*But this Christmas, you can bring hope and healing. Your gift today will help provide new shoes for 150,000 children in time for the holidays. And for some children, a beautiful new smile. Your gift of \$36 will help provide shoes for ten children, \$72 will help provide for 20, \$180 will help provide shoes for 50, and a gift of \$500 will help provide a cleft surgery, restoring a child's smile forever.*

*As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request the beautifully crafted yellow crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake set featuring four of LIFE's colorful crystal 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 smile surgeries, and you may request the beautiful bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."*

*Please call, write, or make your gift online today.*

**Field appeal:**

**JOHN:** Boy, it's a great day here in South Sudan as we come and we get to bring Christmas shoes to these precious children. I want to say thank you to all those who have helped us in the

past, but I want you to realize that there's still a great need, an opportunity for us to put a little love and a little Christmas into each of these children's lives.

And remember, it's not just shoes that we give at Christmas time, it's also the smiles. Around the world, kids who are in need of cleft palate surgeries, or kids who are in need of shoes, will be able to have a little extra something of joy this Christmas because of your giving. I want to say thank you to you for your giving, for your caring, and for loving. I just want to let you know that it is so important, so important for the shoes that we're giving them. There's so many other children that we want to give shoes to, and we're going to reach their villages too. And it's all because you cared enough to give. So God bless you and thank you so much.

**Studio good-bye:**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** I hope you are going online or going to the phone. And you know what? You can get yourself an early gift when you request *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah*. And Tammy, I know this has blessed you.

**TAMMY:** It has! It's been a huge revelation to me. I can't thank you enough for this. There's almost a fresh start in my life.

Will you pray it is a fresh start for you as well? If you're watching today, dive all in. Seek and you will find. Thanks for watching and we'll see you next time on *Life Today*!