

9/8/25

Week 37: CS&S

James & Betty Robison

Repentance #1

Studio discussion:

JAMES: Well, we're going to go back in time. And I welcome you to *Life Today*, James Robison, Betty, my precious wife. We are going to go back, and we're going to look at a moment in history. As a matter of fact, I'm preaching a message on repentance. I was preaching, you know, hundreds and hundreds of crusades. I preached over 600 city wides. They were week-long, eight-day meetings because Billy Graham kept pushing me to go. As a matter of fact, it's this message you're about to hear that aired nationwide on prime time, and Billy Graham called me right after it went off, and said, "James, that's the greatest sermon I've ever heard. And that's the greatest message on repentance, I think, ever preached." I said, "Good night, Billy. You're a great encourager."

But I didn't listen to it. And here it is, over 40 years or so later, 30, around 40 years, that I'm listening to it. I want you to listen to it. This is part one today, part two tomorrow. There's not anything any more important, Betty, than really coming to repentance. We're going to talk to you. Think about this. We want to talk to you about what repentance is and what it isn't. Most people do what it isn't, and they never get to repentance.

I pray, God, that this message blesses every hearer and every hearer we brought to legitimate, transforming repentance; in Jesus's name.

I want to thank all of you for praying for us and helping us literally put God's arms around a broken world, a world he gave his Son to redeem. So I pray that you're blessed by the message that blessed Billy Graham enough to call me, and greatly encouraged me as he did, and did until he left us years ago.

So here's the message preached in Phoenix, Arizona. I had preached two crusades in the coliseum and had exploded the two largest churches in the state with growth. I'm preaching in one of them now. Watch closely.

Classic Teaching:

JAMES: What is repentance? Without it, there's no redemption. What is it? Listen to the words of Paul in Second Corinthians, chapter seven, beginning at verse eight. Second Corinthians chapter seven, beginning at verse eight. Listen closely.

"I made you sorry with a letter. And I don't repent, though I did repent, for I perceive that the same epistle has made you sorry. Now I rejoice not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance. For you were made sorry after a godly manner, that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

What is repentance? Paul said, "I'm grateful that you have repented after a godly fashion. You repented unto salvation. The sorrow of the world worketh death." What is repentance? "I'm glad you repented," Paul said. I'm glad that you've repented in a godly fashion. What is repentance?

First of all, let me state very clearly what it is not. Repentance is not remorse. It is not simply being sorry for your sins. It is not simply saying, I'm sorry. For you see the expression of the average person who says I'm sorry is simply an expression of the fact that they're sorry the consequences of their sin finally overtook them, and they're sorry I got caught. That's the testimony of the average person who says I'm sorry. Now, this is the sorrow of the world. And Paul said the sorrow of the world worketh death. It's not enough for you to say, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. The prodigal son said, I'm sorry. But he could have stood in the pig pen and cried aloud, I'm sorry I'm in trouble. I'm sorry I left home. I'm sorry I lost my wealth. I'm sorry that sin has ruined me. I'm sorry! I'm sorry until he died in the pig pen. Sorry! It's not enough for you to say to God, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Oh, I'm sorry! It's not enough.

That is not repentance. For what are you sorry? You're in trouble. It's not repentance. Our attention as human beings is focused on self. I'm in trouble. Self -- I'm in trouble. That's not repentance. That's remorse.

Second, repentance is not regret. Regret is not repentance. Regret is not repentance. Saying, I wish I hadn't done it, that's regret. Have you ever said I wish I could live my life over? You can't. You can't live it over. And regret is not repentance. You can spend your life saying, I wish I could do it over. I wish I could live my life over. I wish I had another chance. I wish I could start over. You can't live it over, but you can get a new life. You can have a spiritual new birth, a new beginning, but you can't live it over. And you can say, I'm sorry that that happened and I wish it hadn't. That's what Judas did. The scripture tells us concerning Judas that he was sorry. In the Word of God we find these words in Matthew 27, verses three through five. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, when he saw that he was condemned, he repented himself, and he brought again the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and to the elders. And he said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." I'm sorry, I wish I hadn't done it. That's not repentance. And the Bible says he went out and hung himself. And you can know that a man who lives in rebellion against God never repented. He killed himself. He was sorry he did it. He regretted that he did it. But that's not repentance.

Reform is not repentance. Some of you have said, I'm going to start over and live right. I'm going to live right. That's not repentance. You stop today and say, Now, I'm going to live right. I'm going to do everything right. I'll go to church, and I'll be good, and I'll give money. I'll treat people right. It's not repentance that's reform. It's not repentance. Reform is worse. And the Bible says, For by grace are you saved. See, not of works, lest any man should boast. You're not going to be saved by your works, by grace. And if you reform and say, Now, I'm going to do all the right things, it's not salvation.

Last. Repentance is not religion. It is not religion. Now, religion has become the cheap substitute in our world for repentance. Religion is becoming increasingly popular. There are religions all over the world. Let me ask you this. If religion is the answer, if religion can change

your life, if religion could meet the need in every heart, why the cross? Why Jesus? Why the Savior? Religion is a curse. Religion keeps people from God. Religion stands between people and God. You say that doesn't make sense. Satan is subtle and he's going to tell you what you need is religion. You need to meditate. You need to study the different religions of the world. All it'll do is confuse you. If you want to get as confused as a termite in a yoyo, you study religions. Religion is not the answer. It really isn't. It never has been. They had religion when Jesus came. As a matter of fact, the greatest problem Jesus ever met was the problem of religion.

Our churches are filled with people who have never repented -- all over America. They come, but they've never repented. A black pastor said when asked the question, Explain the visible and the invisible church doctrine. He said, That's simple. Sunday morning the visible church. Sunday night, the invisible church. Sunday morning, our buildings are filled with empty people. They've never repented. They're here, but they've never repented. Christians are always fighting among themselves. What's wrong? Many of them are not Christians. They've never repented. They became religious.

I became religious. Nothing happened. I knew God wasn't in my life. I knew I was empty. And so many people are exposed to religion. Three days before Elvis Presley died, God awakened me in the night, and I wrote him a letter. He didn't get it. He died in the bathroom of his mansion reading a book on discovering the skeletal remains of Jesus. I'm sorry. Mr. Presley knows now you'll never find the skeletal remains of Jesus. He's alive. Elvis Presley had been exposed to religion all of his life -- all of his life. Somehow, I can't help but feel, and God knows how I loved him. I wanted the Lord Jesus to so fill his life and take that dynamic ability to communicate and use it for God's glory. I wanted that. Somehow, I can't help but wonder if perhaps some of the people he met in his childhood, some of his relatives who had been exposed to religion, had never repented, and therefore, Elvis was always confused and he was always searching, searching, searching, searching. He told a friend of mine, "I stood in the mansion and I stare at these walls. I'm so bored! With Cadillacs in the garage, and motorcycles, and the luxury. I stare at the walls, I'm so bored!" Life was empty. But he'd been touched by religion, and somehow he kept searching and searching. But I wonder, had he ever met anyone

who had repented? I don't believe he would have ever forgotten it if he could only have met someone in whose life Jesus was more than a religious idea, a living Savior, a Lord of lords and King of Kings.

I was so repulsed by religion when I was a boy that I detested it. I had tried it and I knew it didn't work. I had been christened, I had been through the motions, and I knew it didn't work. I had once taken the Bible in my hand, and I clenched it, and I threw it out the window, and I said, it's not so! So how could the Bible be so and my life so messed up? My family and my home so messed up? I'd met many people who were religious but had never repented.

What is repentance? All through the Bible you find the command to repent. God preached it to his nation, Israel. He warned them they had to repent. We have to repent. Talked to a young man the other night. He told me of all the sins in his life. My first impulse was to tell him, what you need to do is quit this and quit this and quit this. And so finally, I said, "Well, you need to stop that." You know what he said? He said, "I can't. I'm hooked. I can't stop. How do you stop?" Do you know what I was doing? Unbeknownst to me, I was giving that young man bad advice. I was saying, You need to stop. You need to stop. No, do you know what he needed to do? He needed to turn. And he needed to turn his eyes upon Jesus.

Now, folks, I'm going to give you the definition of repentance according to Scripture. Repentance is turning to Jesus Christ.

Studio discussion:

JAMES: That message will continue tomorrow, and we're going to make it very clear what it's not. Please don't miss it. Did you know we were told that we jammed all AT&T systems nationwide? So many people calling after they heard that on primetime all over America, calling to want to give their life to Christ. I'm thinking, and our phone center, we had 300 of the 800 numbers, which they told us was the largest at that time, and we did lead, I believe, 10,000 to Christ that night that got through. But far more didn't get through, and AT&T had to start upgrading.

Betty, God had put such an amazing anointing on me as a young man that was called by God as a very shy guy that never thought I could do anything. And, wasn't it amazing what God did?

BETTY: And it still is, James. It still is! That anointing that God put on you at that young age in our lives has never left him. I can still remember those times. I've watched this message and I weep because it's so current to what we need to hear now about repentance. God's message hasn't changed. We change. We grow older but God is still the same, and he wants you to hear his truth in love.

So, I hope you're being blessed by this message and will continue to tomorrow.

JAMES: I hope you hear so clearly in your spirit that you come to total repentance and the redemption that God offers through Christ, that you share it with others. This is something, you know, you can tell your friends to go back online and watch it on the *Life Today* network. Just go online to *Life Today*/ Life Outreach, either one of them, and you can find this message on this date, tomorrow's date. And you tell your friends to watch it.

You know, Betty, we have enjoyed so much the last, years of our journey. I did the crusades for 35 years or more. We've been doing overseas missions for more than 25, 30 years, and we've been giving away Christmas shoes and smiles now for about, I think, maybe close to 20 years. But it's just been amazing what we can do. And I want you to look at Betty and me walking with just the love of God flowing in our hearts, and we're giving shoes to children and providing smiles, surgery, for their little faces that have been so disfigured.

And you know, Betty, I just get so moved right now just thinking about it. That we can actually put these beautiful little shoes, you know, they look a whole lot like some very famous shoes but we're able to get them very inexpensively thanks to one of our supporters who just miraculously made it happen. Just visit with me and Betty and watch and see if God doesn't want you to put his arms around these precious children and put shoes on their feet, smiles on their little faces. Watch prayerfully.

Transition roll-in: [James Betty Shoes]

JAMES: We want to give children like these, beautiful children shoes -- children all over the world. There goes another one! We want to give them shoes.

You know what Jesus said? "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not." You know what? We are the representatives of Christ. We are his body, we're his family, and we can share his love. We love these little children. We're going to give these little children shoes. Look at these beautiful little feet!

BETTY: They have nothing, really. But they can still play, they can still have fun. They're children! I think that's what they're supposed to be instead of having to worry about walking around without any shoes where they step on stuff and hurt their feet and also get diseases through that too.

JAMES: Betty, they just tough it out and they play but we found right here in this area that hookworms get in the skin, maybe where they have a little tear in the skin, get in the bloodstream, ultimately into the intestines and cause very serious disease and sometimes death.

Just look here! This boy has had a blowout in his tennis shoe! He has played so hard and gotten so dirty. You need to wash your shirt, man!

Isn't it great to see? The kids want to have fun. We're going to love them. With your help, we're going to give them good new shoes. We -- not me -- all of us together! Let's put shoes on all these beautiful children's beautiful feet! It would just be such a wonderful gift to make at this time. I hope you will do all you can. Just give as many pairs as you can to bless as many children and their families as you can.

Studio appeal:

JAMES: You know, I referenced several little children to come up to me, Jesus said. Well, Betty, when they come to our arms, I feel like Jesus is putting his arms around them. Betty, I just love holding little kids. I didn't notice that they were dirty. I was kind of teasing that little kid. He sure didn't notice. But boy, they notice shoes. Their little feet hurt bad and they get a lot of bad infections. We've been giving them shoes now for over 20 years. Betty, you and I went 25 to 30 years to 40 or 50 countries, putting God's arms around little children and just loving them.

We wanted to give them shoes and smiles. We wanted to be able to provide miraculous surgery. The only way we could do it is you. We could tell you what we saw through the eyes of Jesus as we look to the little children that he said, "Let them come to me." The only way we can get his arms around them is that we do it together as God's family, and as the church, as the body of Christ.

Betty, it's been such a joy to hold the children, but an even greater joy to give them shoes. And what a great joy to give them a smile. And haven't our viewers been a blessing to millions of people by simply sharing God's love; isn't it amazing?

BETTY: It really is. Thank you so much for your heart for giving. It is unspeakable joy to be able to put shoes on these children's feet. A lot of them have never had a pair of shoes, James. They just smile so big. And at the same time, to put smiles on their faces, the ones that can't smile or they're too embarrassed to smile because they have a problem. Thank you so much for caring. It means so much to us for you to join with us to make that difference of shoes and smiles. What greater pair could go together than shoes and smiles?

JAMES: Well, your love, God's love through you makes it happen. We have been sending these little shoes, the little Christmas shoes we call them, "Christmas Shoes and Smiles." These you hang on the Christmas tree. If you make a gift of \$100 or more, we give you four of them. And, you know, if you'll give a gift of \$1,000 or more, which provides 275 pairs of shoes, that's

amazing, we're going to send you the beautiful bronze, "The Lion of Judah" with the amazing emblem of the cross there by the Lion of Judah to say thank you.

Could you give \$1,000? Provide 275 pairs of shoes, provide surgeries for smiles? Wouldn't you love to do that? If you give \$36, you give ten children a pair of shoes. Whatever you can do. Please go get your bank card and use it like a check. Go online or call the number that you see there and just make the gift God put on your heart. God, use your viewers of *Life Today* to put your arms, your blessings, on these precious children; in Jesus' name. Please be the miracle so many need. Thank you.

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.

Studio good-bye:

JAMES: Well, Betty and I say thanks in behalf of so many whose lives you're going to bless. Let me just remind all of you, the message on repentance continues tomorrow. Remember, you can tell your friends they can watch it on *Life Today* online and just get each part, today's and tomorrow's. Thank you so much for sharing life.