

8/30/24

Week 35: *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*

James and Betty Robison

Mission show

In the studio

JAMES: Well, welcome to *LIFE Today*! I tell you many times, you can be somebody's miracle, Betty. I'm just overflowing with the love of God and gratitude that I'm watching flow freely through people like you so we see miracles all over the world.

I never dreamed, Betty, when we're giving children shoes and cleft palate surgeries, smiles, this time of the year, 150,000 more children are going to get their first pair of shoes. We give them a little larger than they need so they can usually wear them for at least two years, sometimes it goes longer. This will be the first pair of shoes they ever had that doesn't cause them to get infections in their little feet that are not protected. And it changes them. Because a lot of them, it goes to brain disease that kills them. We're changing all of that.

But here's the deal. I'm really happy right now because we're working with one of our partners that has helped us do so many cleft palate surgeries, and that is Cure International. What a wonderful group! They have got, in of all places, in Uganda, which is a miracle transformation of God even in that country. There is a hospital there that does more brain surgeries than any hospital in the world for all these problems. And here's the thing, Betty, it is no cost to the people. They come there and they get this surgery for their children as a gift from people like you.

Betty, we're going to be able to complete it. You know we need \$1.2 million. Betty, one

of our friends has given \$700,000 toward that. So if we could get \$500,000 we got the miracle.

BETTY: It is very, very exciting to me. Of course, I love giving the shoes. I love putting smiles on these little children's faces. They smile when you give them a pair of shoes. But they really smile when they get the correction with the surgery on their mouth and they get a beautiful smile.

But this is really exciting. These children, it will save many of their lives. Their mothers will be so excited to know that their baby will grow up because of the surgery opportunity, James. And just to expand our outreach. You've been so blessed, I know, by giving the shoes and the smiles. I know you will look at this as a great opportunity to save the lives of children through brain surgery.

JAMES: Well, sometimes it is water on the brain. There are many other things that happen. But imagine, more surgeries there of this type than anywhere in the world. Do you know what I believe? Just like God raised up that person—thank you, Lord—that gave \$700,000, do you understand if you gave \$100 or \$1,000 that's huge? That can make the difference. You know 500 people give \$1,000 we have got the rest of it. But many people give \$100. Most of our support comes from people who give gifts under \$100. Thank God for all the \$100 givers and the \$1,000 givers, and the people that do drill a water well and pay for all of it. I don't know what you can do to help with these shoes and these smiles and the brain surgery, however it is needed, at no cost. That is true with the cleft palate surgery and the shoes we give them. It's all a gift of love. God's love through his family.

Please let's keep putting his arms and the world he loves so much and gave his son to save to redeem. Would you be a part of this? I ask you to be. I want you to watch this very prayerfully and let God speak to you about his will concerning this challenge, which I see, Betty, as an opportunity more than a challenge.

On the mission field

JOHN: Well, I'm here in Uganda, standing in what is going to be operation room number three in the brand-new surgical center that we are building in partnership with our mission partners here in Uganda. Specifically designed to treat neurological disease in children, more than 2,000 surgeries a year, more than any hospital in the world, it is going to happen right here.

ANNOUNCER: For many families in developing countries, a child born with a neurological disability has little hope to survive, largely due to a lack of facilities or funds to get the proper treatment they need. That's why *LIFE Outreach* has joined with mission partner Cure International in building a brand-new neurological surgery center that will provide expert care and life-saving surgery at no cost to families.

This state-of-the-art treatment center isn't just about operating rooms and equipment, it will save lives while providing hope, love, and dignity for children suffering from neurological conditions like spina bifida, hydrocephalus, and brain tumors. Without surgical intervention, these conditions can be a death sentence for those most vulnerable. Yet with access to specialized treatment, these children can defy the odds and continue to grow, play, and learn as all children should.

JOHN: Listen! We do so many wonderful things through *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*, but this facility specifically is the difference between life and death for children who have severe but repairable disabilities. I can't say thank you enough for spreading the gospel through word and deed. God bless you.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Can you imagine what it means to a parent if they've seen another child that went to this center and got an amazing miracle for their brain and got a life? And then for

them to be able to go and Betty, it is not cost—

BETTY: It is at no cost to the family! That's got to put a big smile on their face. We know what costs can be like on medical bills and such.

JAMES: Absolutely. It just puts an indescribable smile over my whole being. The thing about it is it's God's love in his people that provides these miracles. I'm just so grateful—so very, very grateful!

Betty, I'm looking at a picture of the sign that is going with the hospital that we've joined with Cure International and it says, "In partnership with *LIFE Outreach International*." And *LIFE Outreach International* is not an organization. It is a people. It is a family. It's the body of Christ functioning healthily. As I've said over and over, and I don't think I can say it any better, the body of Christ is the only force on the earth that can put God's arms around a broken devastated, defeated dying world. But we can.

Betty, I don't know any people who do it more beautifully and faithfully, and in many instances, sacrificially than our viewers.

BETTY: We're so grateful for you and your heart for helping children, all people. Thank you so much. It means so much to them and it means so much to us. That's what we're here for, to reach out to others, to help others. To show love, God's love; they do get that too, James. They get the spiritual side of it. They know that God is the great physician.

Thank you so much for being excited along with us about this new opportunity of the surgical center and the saving the lives of these precious little ones.

JAMES: I'm looking down here right now, not only at that picture of the sign, I'm looking at this little crystal shoe. This is what we say thank you with. This is hanging on Christmas trees everywhere. And this year, we're sending you different colors in four crystals. Betty, we let everybody know we give *Shoes and Smiles*.

I remember when you saw this story, you said, "James, this is unbelievable!" I want you to watch what happened to a little girl that really needed cleft palate surgery. I want you to see the impact, a miracle of God's love shared by you.

On the mission field

JOHN: So we are here in Angola on the way to a village where Victorina has had a life transformation through Christmas Smiles. We're talking about a beautiful little girl who was born with such a tragic cleft palate, one of the worst I'd ever seen, that's been a two-year endeavor that has been with many ups and downs. She was so malnourished. She had wounds on her body that were so infected. She literally spent three months in the hospital before she could have her surgery.

ASHTON: I just remember thinking, Lord, if this is your will, you have to make it happen because there were so many barriers. God was just faithful and I'm excited to see how she looks today.

JOHN: The first time I saw Victorina, I saw her off in the distance on this huge granite boulder with her and two women pounding out what little bit of cornmeal that they had to make a meal. When I got up here my heart just sank for her. We left, we went back to the village that night where we were camping, and after a long exchange of the kids it was time to go to bed, and Ashton gets up and she walks over and she put her hands on Victorina's cheeks. Ashton was trying to lovingly tell her how beautiful she was. Victorina ran off crying, devastated. Why? Because she wanted to dwell in the shadow. She wanted to be hidden. She didn't want to be seen. She was ashamed.

She was literally in a prison of despair that so broke Ashton's heart that she spent the rest of the night crying in our tent. She asked me, she said, "Dad, isn't there anything we can do for Victorina?"

It began a journey that took hundreds of people, hundreds of hours, and multiple trips to make happen. And now, it has been a day of celebration. It has been a day of miracles. It has been a day of wonder and laughter. Here's a little girl who just two years ago had no friends. And as I'm watching her today in class and she's raising her hand and answering the questions the teacher in her multiplication, she goes along and she introduces each one of her friends to me by name, playing their dance game or kicking the soccer ball.

Victorina has moved from a prison to an open land of possibilities simply through your generosity and your kindness and your compassion through *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*. Victorina is an example of thousands of children around the world that we can help this year with a simple surgery. Whether it be on the mouth, a cleft palate, or whether it is a child with hydrocephalus, there are so many ways that we can bring smiles to families' lives through giving to Christmas smiles.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Isn't that an amazing miracle?

BETTY: Wow, James! Just as John's daughter's heart was broken when she first saw her, he said she wept all night in their tent. My heart is—my face is wet with tears because I'm joyful. I'm so glad that she got the miracle that she so thought she'd never get. James, she went into hiding. She was ashamed for people to look at her and to see what she could feel in her own heart and know.

And now to know, just see that smile. What a beautiful little girl. Her heart has just been blessed. She can play with other children. She can just be herself now and know that she doesn't have to be ashamed and shy away. It just blesses my heart.

JAMES: Okay, I'm 80 and I haven't grown out of a broken heart and I haven't grown past the tears. I'm weeping because that girl is a miracle. But I'm weeping because people like

you—God, I don't know what kind of miracle you need. I don't know if it is somebody in your family who needs surgery or a miracle relationship, but I just need to pause a minute and pray for you.

Father, I don't know what is going on in anybody's life. It is big. It's like that was so big to that little girl. Oh God, and thank you. You did a miracle through the people watching us. They are the ones that make it happen, the surgeries. But Lord, there are people right now that need a miracle. I don't know what it is. But it is not bigger than you and I want you to work a miracle in their lives. We come every day hoping we can inspire them or bring somebody in. They can be the encouraging word that helps them to the miracle. And I pray that for them now; in Jesus' name.

You know the very fact that you let us be here and bring the great testimonies of God's power and his healing in relationships and just seeing people come together even in different churches that never knew how to love each other, seems hard to love anybody even in your own church. I find that so sad. We need to love each other the way God loves and love our neighbors as ourselves. That's what we do at *LIFE Outreach*. That's what we do with the cleft palate surgery. That's what we do when we give children *Shoes and Smiles* for Christmas. That's what we're going to do when we build another hospital. How do you do that? God's love flowing through you like a river. You see that miracle.

Would you make the largest gift you can right now? We've got some gifts to send you to say thank you. But would you make the largest gift you can? 150,000 shoes, smiles, think about it, \$1.2 million to finish a hospital and one of our supporters gave \$700,000 and now we need \$500,000. I think, God! There are 500 people listening to us right now who could give \$1,000. I don't know what you can do but no gift is too small because the effect is priceless. It is a miracle like you just saw. Thank you.

Go online, please, right now. Get your bank card. Get it. Dial the number. Make the best gift you can. And I pray to God you're excited about it. This is Christmas way ahead of time. *Christmas Shoes and Smiles* and miracle surgeries—that's what love does. Do it

now. Thank you so much!

Video begins

ANNOUNCER: Every day, thousands of lives are lost to a waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, now in its 25th year, you could give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is too late.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children, a gift of \$48 will help provide for ten, and a gift of \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you the "God's Word for My Day" devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily reading, an encouraging verse, and a thought to ponder for each day of the year.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "His Word is Life" tumbler set. These two 20-ounce stainless steel tumblers, each inscribed with a scripture, will inspire you throughout the day and help keep your drinks well-insulated while at home or on the go.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and request our beautiful bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: As the world celebrates the birth of Jesus this Christmas, *LIFE Outreach International* is also celebrating nearly two decades of spreading this good news in a very special way with shoes! Yes! Shoes! We, along with our mission partners located throughout the world, have provided two and a half million children with a gift of shoes. Children who in many instances have never had a new pair of shoes.

ISAK: We all celebrate different holidays around the world. The holiday that is pretty common to most of us is Christmas. That's what it feels like here today. It feels like Christmas for us because we're getting to do one of the most incredible things and that is to bless these children with a pair of shoes.

ANNOUNCER: It is because of friends like you that we have been able to reach remote areas every year providing the gift of shoes and sharing the good news of Jesus.

This year we want to once again see children's faces light up with smiles as they receive a new pair of shoes. Unfortunately, there are children who can't smile because they suffer from a condition known as cleft lip or cleft palate. The good news is our annual Christmas Smiles outreach allows us the opportunity to minister to some of the world's poorest children who have no hope of correcting their condition with surgery.

>> But thanks to James and Betty, and the friends of *LIFE Outreach International*, we're able to make lasting changes in children's lives through corrective surgery.

ANNOUNCER: *And this year, LIFE Outreach is expanding our corrective surgeries to include children of neurological disabilities such as spina bifida and hydrocephalus, commonly known as "water on the brain." To meet these children's needs, we need your help to build a new surgical center. This new neurological surgical center will allow our mission partner to expand their capabilities and to perform even more lifesaving surgeries for children and their families who are waiting and so desperately need our help.*

So this Christmas season, as you gather with your loved ones and friends to celebrate the birth of Jesus, know that as you give to our Shoes and Smiles emphasis, you will be providing hope, dignity, and the opportunity for a brighter future to thousands of precious children!

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Do you see that smile? *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*. I'm smiling too. A while ago you saw how quickly I can weep because I not only love those children, I love you. The reason we have *Life Today*, the major outreach we have is media outreach to millions of people. We show them what they can do to be a blessing but we seek to bless you every day. That's why we're here. We really do love you. We would like to know you. We know it won't happen in this lifetime but we can bless you through the gift God's given us.

I told Betty, you could be such a blessing by just sharing who you are and who he is in you. But she never dreamed she would be sitting here by me. Well, Betty, did you ever dream that we would be looking at people and asking them to give shoes, smiles, and a surgical center that does more brain surgeries? I mean this is a real miracle. And this is a Christmas gift that we're raising the funds for right now. And we need a miracle response today. I prayed for you to have a miracle touch in your own life and come into play in your life. And I pray it will. I hope we hear from you. But you can be somebody's miracle today. I believe everybody watching is going to help us give some shoes and some smiles.

BETTY: What three wonderful opportunities! The most serious, brain surgery can change a child's life. They can grow up normally. They can grow up period. Some of them won't make it if they don't have it. And then the smiles; there is nothing like a child's smile. We have all these grandchildren, and great-grandchildren now. And James, I see pictures of them and I smile from ear to ear.

And then shoes for their feet. I remember when our oldest daughter was just a toddler. She loved her little black patent shoes so much. She was so proud of them. She would go to bed at night wearing her little black patent shoes. I would have to slip in after she had gone to bed and take them off her. These children love the gift of these shoes. They not only are proud of them but they protect their feet. They keep them from diseases, James.

What a wonderful opportunity to have these three things so that we can make a difference in the lives of these children.

JAMES: Somebody made a really big gift. By the way, \$100 is a big gift when it changes somebody's life. \$500, \$1,000, I ask you for big gifts. I ask you to think big and give beyond what you would think is just simple. I like for you to accept a challenge and move a mountain and you can. Thank you.

Get your bank card and use it like a check. Always use it that way. Go online or call that number. Make the gift God puts on your heart. Thank you so much for giving his love in demonstration, not just talk, in deed. Thank you!

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End of video

On the mission field

TAMMY: I love this moment! I love it. No child should ever have to play around or walk around without a pair of shoes; something that is good for them, something that will protect them. Not just their feet but their entire life. This is where they play. This is where they walk. This is where they live. There are nails, there is metal, and when you live in these places it is not like you can rush to a clinic right away. Their medical care is not like mine. So what a privilege it is to come in here and give them something that I know will keep them safe.

So as you are prayerfully considering giving, please remember that we also have a ministry where we are changing the smiles of little ones as well who have been born with cleft lip or cleft palate. So don't forget that today, *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*.

Thank you so much for your giving. It all matters. Go online or call that number today and give the best gift you can. Yay!

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Let me just remind all of you about the surgical center. The \$1.2 million is beyond the budget for the shoes and the smiles, Betty. We cover it all. If each one of us will just do what God impresses us and enables us to do, it will be enough. Thank you so much.

You're going to enjoy the shoes. These just glisten. And you know, this has just become an amazing miracle. Somebody showed us the shoes so we could give them to the kids. And then our staff said, "What if we give them a little shoe to put on the Christmas tree?"

But people ask, "Where did you get that?" And it spreads. And we get to give *Shoes and Smiles*. Thank you so much for doing it. God bless you!