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Week 36: *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*

James and Betty Robison

John Zmirak

In the studio

JAMES: We welcome you to *Life Today*. We're here because you are important. God cares so much about you. His love expressed in Jesus is indescribable. Betty and I have prayed with all of our staff that we keep sharing that love and that truth. That's the reason I started The Stream to bring together very diverse individuals from various backgrounds, races, and nationalities; and to bring them together around principles that matter.

I'm telling you, everything we do is because God loves you and your family and wants the best for you. Betty and I have our hearts in harmony with his. That's what we want for you. That's why our guest today is one of the greatest, if not the most popular, writer for The Stream. He is one of the smartest people I've ever met. He's one of the most courageous, and he communicates indescribably with his pen and communicating. Eric Metaxas thinks the world of him.

He's written a book. I think the cover is just magnificently fabulous. It is so well done. It says *No Second Amendment, No First Amendment*. Now it's John Zmirak who wrote this. If you don't read his articles on The Stream—don't miss them—you don't want to miss them. John has written a great book.

The Second Amendment is more important than you can ever imagine. But here's the thing I'd like you to understand. The reason that the battle right now against this second amendment is so great is that basically, they've already done away with the first

amendment. That's how they think they can finally get at it and destroy it.

John, I'm glad to have you here on *Life Today*, and with *The Stream*. How long was this on your heart to write and the understanding, the importance of it?

JOHN: I was interested in it like three or four years ago. I started looking at the historical connection between gun control, done in the name of protecting us, and public safety. The connection between that and tyrannical governments persecuting unpopular minority groups, especially unpopular religious groups.

I saw what had happened to the Christians in Iraq in the wake of the Iraq war. I'd seen, of course, what happened in Rwanda in the '90s. And then looking back historically, I started to read the history. There is a very powerful book by genocide scholar R. J. Rummel, it is called *Death by Government*. He documented that between 1914 and 1990, 170 million civilians, at least, 170 million civilians were intentionally murdered by their own governments; that doesn't include casualties of war or death by negligence—intentional murder.

What were the common factors? What was the single common thread between all those victims from Cambodia to Rwanda to Germany to Poland to Spain?

JAMES: As well as the Soviet Union.

JOHN: And China, one thing connected them. They had all been disarmed by their governments first. The Weimar Republic, the most democratic constitution in history, had very strict gun control. Of course, the Nazis and the communists just disobeyed the law but all the law-abiding people registered their guns. So when the Nazis took over, they were able to say which Jews have guns? Which members of labor unions have guns? They collected all the guns in the build-up to Kristallnacht when they attacked all the synagogues and burned them and started beating Jews up on the street. The same thing happened in the Soviet Union. Lenin, the first thing he said was, "Seize the food." The

second thing he said was, "Seize the guns." It happened in Mao Tse's China. It happened in Cuba under Castro. It happened under Maduro in Venezuela in the late 1990s. And now, it's happening in America.

If you look at other Western countries, where the civilians have been disarmed by the government, you find that the government is in no way afraid of the people. We want the government on some level to be afraid that if they push the people beyond a certain point, if they violate their most fundamental rights, something might happen to that government. That's what James Madison said. The reason the Second Amendment passed unanimously was that Congress, and all the founding fathers, supported gun rights. The reason was expressed by James Madison in the Federalist Papers. He said if all the checks and balances, and the separation of powers and the federalism and all the mechanisms that I put into place in this constitution to frustrate a tyrannical government, if they were to all fail, and of course, we see they are failing now in front of us, if they were to all fail, there still would be a militia of half a million armed citizens who would frustrate any tyrannical government.

Well, if you look at countries like Germany, homeschooling is illegal. They would never try that here. Why? The people are disarmed in Germany, they are not disarmed here. In Canada, pastors are going to prison for citing Leviticus's teaching on sexual morality. They are going to prison for hate crimes. They don't have—people have been disarmed in Canada. The existence of an armed citizenry is the last backstop. It is the in-case-of-emergency break glass if the government gets out of control.

The U.S. army couldn't hold Afghanistan. Do you think the army of a tyrannical government could hold Texas and Oklahoma and Mississippi and all the red states? We came very close to a totalitarian state right here right in America under COVID. That is what goaded me to finish this book and make it as good as possible. To wake people up to the fact that without the second amendment, without a citizenry that is as well armed as it can be, that has comparable weapons to the U.S. military, because remember, when the second amendment was written, they said citizens could have the same guns as the

continental army. In fact, cannons were covered under the Second Amendment. There are multiple court decisions that you can have cannons under the Second Amendment. The intent was clear to have an armed citizenry so they could be safe from the government.

If you take away the Second Amendment, it just multiplies the whole rest of the Constitution by zero. It is like, James, I'm going to make you a millionaire. I will pay you a million dollars: \$1 a year for a million years. That's how much the Constitution means without the second amendment.

BETTY: Do you think people are beginning to get it?

JOHN: I think so. I think so. The Supreme Court has been ruling well. They just recently ruled that New York state violated the First Amendment. New York state tried to shut down the N.R.A. by going to all its banks and insurance companies and all its vendors saying, "New York City won't do business with you unless you cut off the N.R.A." It is this thing called debanking. And they say explicitly, "It is because we don't like your views."

The left has cut itself off from the vision of the human person on which America was founded. America was founded on a vision of the human person as an image and likeness of God who has moral responsibility and fundamental rights. The left has rejected that and they see us instead as ants in a colony who should simply obey the instructions sent down to them from the top down.

BETTY: They're saying they want you to have one view and it is their view. And if you don't, it is wrong. And now it is becoming against the law, almost.

JOHN: Right! They don't want to persuade you. They've given up on persuasion. What they're relying on is force and fear. They will throw anything at the wall and see if it sticks. This is the kind of thing they did in communist Poland to Lech Walesa and solidarity. We have to realize what time it is and where we are. We are in communist

Poland right now. These people—I describe them as the Gadarene swine thundering down the cliff to drown in the sea.

JAMES: Well, they want to drown a lot of people with them and destroy them. Betty and I agree 100 percent. You're going to see how she jumps in. Let me just say this. There is something very concerning to me right now. We have led a million people who are likely to be terrorists themselves into the country who can be bought for \$100 to kill anybody, who could start trouble anywhere. I want to protect my family. I want to protect my neighbor. Betty and I both—and by the way, I'm a lifetime member of the N.R.A. I don't think she is—but both of us have the right to carry. Both of us want to protect our family and our neighbors, and we believe it is right. We don't bat an eye about it. Now you didn't even own a gun.

JOHN: No, I'd never handled a loaded gun until like 2021. I was already working on this book and I said, well, I ought to get a gun so I'm not such a hypocrite writing about the Second Amendment. [Laughing] I grew up in New York City where only the cops and the criminals have guns. And you count on the cops to maybe show up and draw a chalk line around you after you're dead. That is the model that the liberals and the Democrats want for America.

One of the most poignant chapters in *No Second Amendment, No First* is where I compare the fate of the Christians in Iraq to the Christians in Syria. In Iraq, when we fought our stupid, pointless war in Iraq and conquered the country, we imposed American-style gun control. The Christians all obeyed the law and turned in their guns. Guess who didn't! Everybody else, especially ISIS. So it would be funny except that 750,000 Christians, who had been there since the second century, they've been there since the apostles, were killed or driven out by ISIS and other Sunni militias. You go next door to Syria, the same kind of Christians, both speak Syriac, both have been there since the third and second century, they armed themselves. They disobeyed the gun control laws. They formed militias with the curds and conquered ISIS. Two side-by-side countries, it is like God gave us a laboratory experiment with one as the control and one as the

experimental group.

When you disarm unpopular religious groups, they get murdered. It happened to the Jews. It happened to the Christians in the Middle East. Right now the Armenians are being persecuted in Azerbaijan. The people are disarmed and helpless, and they're soon going to be cowering in their homes. That can't happen here.

JAMES: Let me try to bring this to a conclusion. The book is absolutely fabulous. John is. You pray for him. You've got a gun. You've got good with it. He wants to protect himself and his neighbors, and with what's come into our country and coming in, we all may need to be the protector of the people we love. So don't hesitate to be that.

Get this book and share it. Get it out and let's protect the Second Amendment because we're already losing the power of the first. If we lose this one, it is like he said, the enemy takes over the world and destroys freedom. Jesus died for our freedom. He wants us to live for freedom.

I'm asking you please, go to *The Stream*, let us help you understand why things matter, why principles are absolutely imperative for a marriage, for a business, for entertainment, or sports. There is nothing that works well without the basic principles that we're teaching continually on The Stream like our founders did with very diverse leaders who love freedom and love you. This is really, really important.

John, you know we do everything we can to put God's arms around a hurting world. Our viewers are the most amazing people. That's why I'm going to be surprised if they don't help us preserve the First Amendment and the Second Amendment and understand the importance, of course, of both. But I want you to know right now, we're asking you to help us give *Shoes and Smiles* to children. Do you know what it means to give 150,000 kids a pair of shoes they've never had? And a lot of them have foot diseases that go to brain diseases and we can change all that. And also, we want to give smiles.

We've got a really exciting thing to share with you during this time and that is that we're going to be able to build a surgical center to do brain surgeries that can be the most magnificent thing in the world working with CURE International. They have a hospital that does more brain operations than any in the world. Well, we're going to be able to help them expand that. I really want you to listen to everything we talk about during this time because we'll be talking about *Christmas Shoes and Smiles* for a while but we'll also be talking about a hospital.

Betty, it is a joy. It is a joy to give shoes for Christmas. By the way, you want to get this little crystal shoe for any gift, and this is so beautiful, there are four beautiful little crystal shoes. I'm just talking about that because when you see this on your tree or anybody looks at it, they start talking about, where did you get that? Well, giving *Shoes and Smiles* and you get to be a missionary to bless people. Watch this very closely.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: In the heart of Africa lies an oasis of healing. That special place is the CURE Children's Hospital of Uganda. Doctors here are well-known for their specialization in neurosurgery. The children who arrive here are usually born with neuro disabilities like hydrocephalus, which is an excessive accumulation of water on the brain. Left untreated, about 80 percent die before reaching adulthood.

LIFE Outreach is partnering with Cure to help save the lives of these precious children. Children like Oloka Favor who is following up with his doctors for the third time.

ASHTON: I'm standing here in the CURE operating room with Oloka right behind me. He is four months old. I was speaking with his mom, Maurion, just a few minutes ago. She is 20 years old. Her baby, Oloka is sitting right here and he is about to go into surgery.

Open captions >> I realized that my baby's head was too large when he was about two

months old. I took him to a hospital but they could not help. Then a friend referred me to CURE.

ANNOUNCER: The doctors that gathered to operate on Oloka Favor agreed upon a procedure to insert a single shunt to divert the access water on his brain. The operation was a success.

DR. TOMSON: Apart from this being a Christian organization, I'm a born-again Christian, when you deal with complex operations, you realize that it is God that leads you through it. We cannot do this work without him, definitely. That's why we need that prayer every operation.

ANNOUNCER: Success stories like Oloka Favor are made possible by the support of friends of *LIFE Outreach*. Their partnership with the doctors and team members of CURE is helping save lives. The hospital here not only offers highly skilled care but also provides spiritual guidance to Oloka Favor and his mother as well as thousands of other children and their families.

TIM: We're sharing the love of God in all that we're doing. We're integrating spiritual ministry. We're praying for the vulnerable. And thousands of thousands of people are coming to know Christ through the impact of this hospital. We're so thankful to James and Betty, *LIFE Outreach International*. We're so, so thankful to partner with like-minded groups like you to bless vulnerable children. It's just remarkable. There are miracles happening every day at our hospitals and it wouldn't be possible without people supporting like you all.

In the studio

JAMES: Oh, boy! God, just thank you. Listen. They will do over 2,000 surgeries a year and we're going to be able to help them build a complex hospital right there joining it. You can give them just an incredible outreach. We actually have someone who is

helping. That's over a million dollars that we're asking God to let us give to them. We had somebody that's already made a fabulous gift to help us with that. We're asking you to help.

But also remember this. We have a goal right now to raise money to give 150,000 shoes. We're asking all of you to give whatever you can. And for any gift, we'll send you the beautiful crystal shoe; and for \$100 all four shoes. But the point is what we're talking about is putting God's arms of love around people. You can see the love in those missionaries and those overseers and those doctors. It is an amazing thing. But Betty, *LIFE Outreach* is the main source of support for many of these outreaches. And to think that we've got a donor that's given a large gift to help us be able to help them complete that hospital, that in itself is a miracle.

So would you right now just say God, what can I do? Can you give a \$50 or a \$100 gift? Could you give \$1,000 or more? God, whatever your viewer here that has loved us enough to watch and appreciates what we do, God impress them to give what you want them to give. I know you'll enable them to do it; in Jesus' name.

Would you join us in this exciting project? I pray with all my heart you will. Please do it. Please!

Begin video

ANNOUNCER: For almost two decades *LIFE's Christmas Shoes and Smiles* has continued to provide shoes for impoverished children throughout the world, as well as corrective surgeries for children with cleft palate disorders. By responding today, you can 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 shoes for 20. \$180 will help provide shoes for 50. And a gift of \$500 will help provide a corrective smile surgery.

This year we have an incredible opportunity to help construct a new surgical center that will provide lifesaving surgeries to children suffering serious neurological conditions. This \$1.2 million project is up and above *LIFE*'s normal budget but because of one generous friend for *LIFE*, only \$500,000 is needed.

As a thank you for your gift of support to this life-saving outreach, be sure to request the blue 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 crystal shoe ornaments.

Finally, please consider an extra gift of \$1,000 or more to help construct *LIFE*'s new surgical center. And with this gift, you may request this beautiful bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

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

End of video

On the mission field

TAMMY: These are tough conditions. These people are living in absolute poverty. I'm sure it is hard to provide for your family. I don't know what they have. I don't know what their need is. But I love that I don't have to figure it out, God just sends us. He sends us and he says, show up.

It's what I do love about *LIFE Outreach*. For the many years that I've traveled with them around the world, wherever we see a need we just jump in. Whatever it looks like, we're thinking of kingdom-minded things. We're thinking of saving a life but saving their very life, their soul. To me, that's the gospel, what it's all about—spreading the love of Jesus Christ and sharing the good news of Jesus.

You know, James and Betty started this *Christmas Shoes and Smiles* years ago. I think their heart was absolutely about just showing the love of God, especially to these children

all around the world. And it's so, so wonderful. The joy they feel getting something brand-new! Gosh, it just could change everything for you! Oh my goodness, baby, you need—you need these shoes.

These shoes that protect their feet will keep them from danger, will keep them from infection, from injury, from hookworm that ultimately could lead to death. This is an important need right now all around the world.

So if you've given before, thank you so much. If you've never had a chance to give to this ministry, this part of it, *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*, then I would encourage you to make the best gift you possibly could. We want to keep putting shoes on children all around the world. We want to do it all. It's been a great year, it's been an incredible year of ministry, whether it's been water, whether it's been food, or whether it's been shoes. Right here we're so blessed to do kingdom things. And together, we are changing the lives of people all around the world. We couldn't do it without you. We love you, we appreciate you.

Thank you so much!

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: I just feel like we're asking God for a miracle, and you're the one that provides the miracles. Betty, to think that we can give shoes to little children that have never had a pair of shoes that they could wear outside, or anywhere. They can wear these for a year, sometimes several years as their little feet grow. We give them a little bit bigger size so they can kind of grow into them too.

But to think we can do this brain surgery hospital, and along with the cleft palate surgeries that we do, it is amazing what God's love does when it flows freely through us. I want you to make the best gift you can. Think about being able to complete that hospital to do perhaps another 2,000 surgeries. Imagine that! Just change children's lives, save

their lives, give them a life.

And somebody, the \$1.2 million needed to complete it, gave \$700,000. And now I'm asking you, could we give together the \$500,000 plus, to give the money necessary to give 150,000 children shoes? God, this is a miracle. But we're the miracle when we release that love.

Would you go online? Would you dial that number? And would you be the miracle that's going to make such a difference? Thank you for being a miracle to so many. Thank you.

John, thank you. It is a very important book. I want to thank you for being an answer to prayer. You just keep blessing people on The Stream and everywhere you go. Thank you so much.

If you want John's book, we'll be more than glad to send it to you. You just make any gift to give surgeries, to give help, shoes, whatever, we'll gladly send it to you. Thank you so much!