

Dear Friends,

I have a book in my Library by Trevor Hudson called “A Mile in My Shoes” – so often we tend to say “we understand another’s pain” but until we’ve walked in their shoes, we really don’t understand the depth of their pain, nor will we ever understand their deepest feelings.

Working at the Dementia Unit some years ago I came across a resident wanting to get out of the front door, she said she wanted to go home, my response was “I understand” - she turned to me and said “no you don’t!” I quietly responded “no, I don’t understand”. I really didn’t understand how she felt. This is something we were taught in Pastoral Care Training and I had forgotten. We may have had similar experiences but we never know how another feels. That meeting with the resident was a real learning and turning point for me in pastoral care.

When I think of the encounters Christ had with people he met along life’s way, I can’t remember him saying “I understand how you feel”, instead he reached out with compassion and listened to what their pain was and walked with them through their pain and sorrow.

There is a story or poem about a man coming to church with dirty shoes. He sat near someone who was annoyed at this man sitting so close, their shoes were touching - their soles were touching. It wasn’t until after the service that the man with the dirty shoes said:



“My name’s Charlie; I’m glad to meet you, my friend.’
There were tears in his eyes but he had a large, wide grin.
‘Let me explain,’ he said, wiping tears from his eyes.
‘I’ve been coming here for months and you’re the first to say ‘Hi.’
‘I know that my appearance is not like all the rest.
‘But I really do try to always look my best.

‘I always clean and polish my shoes before my very long walk.
‘But by the time I get here they’re dirty and dusty, like chalk.’
My heart filled with pain and I swallowed to hide my tears.
As he continued to apologize for daring to sit so near
He said, ‘When I get here I know I must look a sight.’
‘But I thought if I could touch you then maybe our souls might unite.’

I was silent for a moment, knowing whatever was said
Would pale in comparison. I spoke from my heart, not my head.
‘Oh, you’ve touched me,’ I said, ‘And taught me, in part
‘That the best of any man is what is found in his heart.’
The rest, I thought, this shoe man will never know.
Like just how thankful I really am that his dirty old shoe touched my soul.”

This story always touches my heart, we often judge another harshly about the way they are dressed or wear their hair, however we read in 1 Samuel 16:7b, “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (NIV).

My prayer is that we look past the outward appearances and into the heart of one another. When we do, we see a beauty that shines from within. May the beauty of Jesus be seen in each one of us.

In Christian love and service,
Lyn

0412 990 949

Where have you been?
Where are you going?
What is your life coming to?
Where is the meaning?
Where is the purpose?
What's left when we are all through?

You're searching for Jesus, looking to find
Hope for tomorrow and some peace of mind
When you can find him in the bible
And many churches that I know
But 'til you find him in the mirror
You've got a long way to go
So mirror (mirror, mirror)
Mirror (mirror, mirror)
On the wall (on the wall, on the wall)
I know (I know, I know)
Who is (who is, who is)
Lord of all (lord, lord of all)
Just let me see him
Every day (every day)
For me (for me, for me)
That is (that is, that is)
The only way (the only way, the only way)

You've heard of the truth
Heard of his message
Shouldn't that turn you around?
Could you have missed it?
Not understood it?
Do you know what you have found?

You're searching for Jesus, looking to find
Hope for tomorrow and some peace of mind
When you can find him in the bible
And many churches that I know
But 'til you find him in the mirror
You've got a long way to go
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Mirror
Songwriters: Eve Jeffers, Mary J. Blige,
Christopher Stewart, Terius Nash. For non-
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