

New Shoes – T A Davies

NEW SHOES

By Timothy A Davies

Copyright 2006 



New Shoes – T A Davies

I considered my shoes as I walked, being bumped and jostled by the crowd. They were old shoes. I had been thinking about getting new ones for some time now but I kept putting it off. And all around me, people pushed and crowded as we all moved blindly along the wide road.

I looked down at my old shoes. The once-white covers were dirty and stained. There were holes where the rain would get in on wet days. The soles were slick and sometimes I would slip. In fact, it happened more and more lately. They were worn at odd angles from the way I walked and now I couldn't walk straight even if I wanted to. The laces were gray, knotted, and frayed at the edges. I didn't pull them tight anymore for fear they would break.

Perhaps, I thought to myself, I could use new shoes. But I really didn't know if I was ready to give these up because, even though they smelled bad, they were really comfortable. I had worn them for so long.

New Shoes – T A Davies

Then a man I had never met before stepped out of the crowd. His face was kind and loving and full of a peace I could not begin to describe. He must have read my thoughts for in a compelling voice He said to me, “I have new shoes for you.”

“Tell me about your new shoes,” I replied.

The stranger shifted easily and the rest of the world seemed to melt away as we talked about His shoes. “My shoes will never wear out,” He began. “And, as long as you keep them on, they will protect you from the hardships of the road and you will not slip or stumble.

“The shoes I have for you will take you on a path few will travel, yet it is a path that many would like to find.”

Then a warm smile spread across His face like sunshine in spring and He continued, “But most importantly, these are the only shoes that can climb the stairs to my Father’s house.”

When He stopped, by the look on His face, you would have thought He had just shared the secret of immortality.

I remained skeptical.

New Shoes – T A Davies

I thought for a moment and then said, “So, you say these shoes of your will never wear out. Are they made of some space-age material invented by NASA? Or perhaps it is some new rubber discovered in the deepest, darkest corners of the rainforest?”

Brushing the hair aside from His face, He answered patiently, “No it is not some newly-invented space-age material or even recently discovered rubber. In fact, the formula for my shoes is two thousand years old.”

I raised an eyebrow. “Then why haven’t I ever heard of them before? And what kind of guarantee do they come with?”

“Well,” He replied “you *are* hearing about them now. And as far as a guarantee, you will have to have faith in my promise.”

New Shoes – T A Davies

I still had questions.

“Well then,” I asked, “do they light up? Do they pump? Is there a fancy logo slashing across the side? Do they have springs and things? Are they at *least* the most comfortable shoes I will ever wear?”

“No,” said the kind stranger, “I am afraid they do not light up or bounce. And they are very plain. Most of the time they are comfortable, but sometimes it will hurt to wear the shoes I have for you.”

“Hurt my feet?” I exclaimed, “Why would I want shoes that will hurt my feet?”

“Oh you misunderstand,” He said with a touch of sadness at my lack of understanding, “I did not say that the shoes themselves would hurt your feet, but sometimes it will be difficult to wear these particular shoes.”

New Shoes – T A Davies

Then I remembered something. “Oh yeah, that’s right, I should want these so that I can go on that other path, the one that’s hard to find, the one that leads to your father’s house. But why would I want to go there anyway?”

The stranger’s face seemed to glow from within as He considered my question. A longing was apparent in the tilt of His head. It was then that I noticed the small scars on His forehead.

He sat down for a moment and I sat at His feet. It seemed a good place to be. And for a brief time the call of the crowd was stilled.

“My Father’s house is a place of wonder,” He began, “where there is no pain or hunger, greed or anger, care or want. It is a place of eternal security. And I have set aside a room for you.”

“But,” He continued with stern warning, “the road that leads there can only be traveled in the shoes I have to give you and the journey will not be an easy one.”

New Shoes – T A Davies

“Your Father’s house sounds great, but why can’t I just make my own shoes?” I asked. “I am pretty talented. I am sure with a little hard work, I could make shoes that would climb the stairs.”

Then His smile disappeared and sadness crept into His eyes. At that moment it seemed as though the weight of the world was on His shoulders.

“Unfortunately,” He began, “there are many trying to make their own shoes. They will not even find the path. But sadder still are those who have taken the wonderful shoes I have given them and changed them to fit their own sense of style. For they think they are on the path, but their shoes are so soiled they will never be able to climb the stairs to my Father’s house.”

New Shoes – T A Davies

I thought about what He had said. “All right,” I replied, “You have just about convinced me that I want to get your shoes. But exactly how much are these wonderful shoes going to cost?”

There had to be a hook, I just knew it.

He rose and looked straight into my heart. “Nothing,” He said simply “I have paid the price for you.”

“Why would you buy shoes for me?” I asked

“Because I love you.” He replied without hesitation.

“But I don’t know you,” I protested.

“Walk in my shoes and you will know me. Travel the road they will take you on and you will know me” He said.

New Shoes – T A Davies

After a moment He continued. “But I do require one thing.”

“And what is that?” I asked skeptically.

“You must give up your old shoes,” said the stranger. There was no compromise in His words.

That was not as simple as it first seemed. I loved my old shoes. They were easy to put on and they were comfortable. They fit in with the rest of the crowd, who also wore old shoes. And even though they smelled bad, I knew them well. I knew what to expect.

New Shoes – T A Davies

I finally agreed to take the stranger's shoes. I put them on and at once found myself on an unfamiliar road. A road that was much narrower than the one I was used to walking on. I could still see the people I walked with before, but now I was set apart.

The stranger was right. Although the shoes did not hurt my feet, the people I used to walk with made fun of them. They mocked and pointed and didn't understand why I wouldn't walk with them any more. They told me that their way was better and that I should walk on the wide road with everyone else. They pointed out that my shoes were the old style, that times had changed and that I needed the shoes that most of the crowd was wearing. "Shoes of tolerance" they called them.

It was very tempting to put on my old shoes.

New Shoes – T A Davies

Fortunately, I met other people on the narrow path that had also received shoes from the stranger and they encouraged me.

Some explained to me that the shoes were so valuable that I could have never paid the price myself. And the longer I walked on the road, the easier it was. The people I used to walk with still made fun of me and even threw things occasionally. But the stranger was right. As long as I kept the shoes on, I was protected.

New Shoes – T A Davies

Then there came a day when I found my old shoes in the back of the closet. I hadn't worn them in a long time and there was no one around so I decided to try them on – just for old times sake.

They slipped on just as easily as I remembered. But when I tried to stand, I fell. I fell all the way down to the wide road.

I was back in the crowd and found that it was a place that I no longer wanted to be. The people were rude and nasty, pushing their way to a goal I could not see, walking over all who fell and could not keep up.

New Shoes – T A Davies

When I could not stand it anymore, I took off my old shoes. But now my feet were far too dirty for the wonderful shoes the stranger had given me. I sat down in the road and cried.

And just when I needed him the stranger emerged from the crowd, (no doubt peddling more shoes.) “Why are you crying?” He asked.

I told him how I had put back on my old shoes and how my feet were now too soiled for the shoes he had given me.

Such a look of compassion came to him as I had ever seen before and without another word, He knelt at my feet and began to wash them with the hem of His robe. I started to protest, but He stopped me saying, “This is what I came for.” I was amazed, for there was not the trace of a stain on His robe when He was finished.

As He walked away, He turned back to me and said, “I know it is difficult, but stay out of your closet. Remember, I am with you always.”

New Shoes – T A Davies

The narrow path I traveled was long and hard, as the stranger had said it would be. There were many wonders along the way. The view from this road was much clearer. I saw things I would have never seen from the wide road. The wide road was busy and always changing. From the narrow way I could practically see into forever.

The end of the road came suddenly and without warning. There before me rose a staircase that disappeared into the clouds. I could not see its top.

My steps were quick and sure as I climbed towards the unknown on the promise of a stranger who had given me new shoes.

Soon I was covered with mist and uncertainty. Had I taken the right road? Was this the staircase to His father's house? Had I done all the things I was supposed to do?

New Shoes – T A Davies

Then at last the mist parted as I came to the top stair. My breath caught in my throat and words failed. His father's house was more wonderful than He had said.

There were streets of gold and angels and singing and the world behind me faded away. I saw the stranger seated on a throne and He shone brighter than the sun.

He held out His hand to me and suddenly it all became clear. I knew why He had given me the shoes and the terrible price He had paid for them. I fell on my face and cried with joy. I was not worthy of His shoes and yet He cared enough to pay for my way.

And with a terribly scarred hand that was softer than the finest silk, He cupped my face to His. "Because I love you," was all He had left to say.

New Shoes – T A Davies

And then with a heart that was less than perfect, I reached out in love and thanked Jesus for my new shoes.

