

## INEXPRESSIBLE JOY

My feet were made for feeling  
And not for covering up.  
When my toes touch the streets of gold  
What joy will fill my cup!

Did I say fill? Much more than that!  
My joy will overflow to others who  
Have their own cups so full of joy  
They splash and reach me too!

Dedicated to my friend and college roommate Jane Eyre Leonard, one of whose ideas of joy in eternity is to walk barefoot in Heaven.

To ponder: What images bring thoughts of inexpressible joy to your mind?

In response to reading my essay entitled "Shoes," Jane wrote me a beautiful reply. I knew I had to share it with others, but how? Should I add it to the end of "Shoes"? Or put it into my diary – an essay called "A Penny For Your Thoughts"? Or continue to wait for inspiration to strike?

My answer came early this morning. I woke up about 1:30 a.m. with thoughts of Jane and Heaven on my mind, thoughts that soon formed themselves into a four line poem that I felt represented Jane's sentiments very well. Wondering if I would remember the words until morning and having no writing equipment at hand, I repeated the poem to myself over and over before falling back to sleep. At 5:00 I woke again, and the poem was still there! What's more, a second verse and other ideas were percolating in my brain. That's when I knew that Jane's letter and the poem would be a separate entity, an essay of their own. How I thank God for the creative power he still gives me during the night! This time I asked my aide for a tablet and pencil. Slowly I wrote down the notes from which I am working now.

Here's what Jane said about "Shoes":

Your story about having to wear "sturdy oxfords" rang a bell for me. When I was five years old I had rheumatic fever and was confined to bed for 6 months, after which I was so weak I had to re-learn how to walk. As a child I had to wear oxfords with arch supports, while all the other kids wore sneakers, sandals and loafers. How I hated that! I really could relate to your story.

I also enjoyed the reflections on the Biblical accounts involving shoes and feet. Another thing I was not allowed to do as a child, which everyone else was allowed, was to go barefoot. I've always *loved* the "take off your shoes ..." verses and the sense that with my feet I can feel the holy ground on which I stand. How inseparable (in this life) are our bodies and spirits. There is a Spiritual that says, "*when I get to Heaven gonna put on my shoes, gonna walk all over God's Heaven.*" My response to that is: "gonna take off my shoes!" I want my feet to feel Heaven!

Thank you, Jane, for your wonderful insights. When I let my friend Vallie read Jane's letter this morning, she made some interesting comments about the Spiritual. "Slaves had no shoes," she said. "The prodigal son was also given shoes by his father." I could certainly see how having shoes would be pure joy for some people while being without shoes would be pure joy for others. Of course the supreme joy of Heaven will be to see our Lord Jesus Christ and to be in the presence of God. But there joy itself will take on dimensions we cannot imagine on earth. Wait and see!

My title is from a powerful passage written by Peter to God's faith family: *Praise be to the God and*

*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:3-9).*

May inexpressible and glorious joy be yours, now and forevermore!

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