



THE SHOE



*My alarm went off,
It was Sunday again.
I was sleepy and tired,
My one day to sleep in.*

*But the guilt I would feel
The rest of the day
Would have been too much,
So I'd go and I'd pray.*

*I showered and shaved,
I adjusted my tie,
I got there and sat
In a pew just in time.*

*Bowing my head in prayer
As I closed my eyes,
I saw the shoe of the man next to me
Touching my own. I sighed.*

*With plenty of room on either side, I thought,
"Why must our soles touch?"
It bothered me, his shoe touching mine,
But it didn't bother him much.*

*A prayer began: "Our Father"
I thought, "This man with the shoes has no pride.
They're dusty, worn, and scratched
Even worse, there are holes on the side!"*

*"Thank You for the blessings," the prayer went on.
The shoe man said a quiet "Amen."
I tried to focus on the prayer,
But my thoughts were on his shoes again.*

Aren't we supposed to look our best

*When walking through that door?
"Well, this certainly isn't it," I thought,
Glancing toward the floor.*

*Then the prayer was ended
And the songs of praise began.
The shoe man was certainly loud,
Sounding proud as he sang.*

*His voice lifted the rafters,
His hands were raised high,
The Lord could surely hear
The shoe man's voice from the sky.*

*It was time for the offering
And what I threw in was steep.
I watched as the shoe man reached
Into his pockets so deep.*

*I saw what was pulled out,
What the shoe man put in,
Then I heard a soft "clink"
As when silver hits tin.*

*The sermon really bored me
To tears, and that's no lie
It was the same for the shoe man,
For tears fell from his eyes.*

*At the end of the service,
As is the custom here,
We must greet new visitors
And show them all good cheer.*

*But I felt moved somehow
And wanted to meet the shoe man
So after the closing prayer,
I reached over and shook his hand.*

*He was old and his skin was dark,
And his hair was truly a mess
But I thanked him for coming,
For being our guest.*

*He said, "My names' 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...*

*You might be best friends one year,
pretty good friends the next year,
don't talk that often the next year,
don't want to talk at all the year after that.*

*So, I just wanted to say,
even if I never talk to you again in my life,
you are special to me and
you have made a difference in my life.
I respect you, and truly cherish you.*

*Send this to your friends,
no matter how often you talk,
or how close you are,*

Let old friends know you haven't forgotten them,

*and tell new friends you never will.
Remember, everyone needs a friend,
someday you might feel like you have no friends at all.*

*People remember you not for what you said
or for what you did,
but how you made them feel.*

*Sent in By Ofc. Bob Castlen
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