

Where are your shoes taking you?

Matthew's gospel text doesn't talk about the types of shoes worn by Jesus and his first disciples. But it does reveal much about what they used their shoes for.

Matthew makes a point of telling us that Jesus goes on a specific journey. In chapter 4 of Matthew's gospel, we read, "*He made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali.*" (4:13) Jesus is not looking for lakefront property. Jesus is looking to fulfill the prophecy that was revealed long ago to Isaiah: "*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.*" (4:16) Jesus is that great light. Jesus walks in obedience to God.

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness he said to the devil, "*Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.*" (4:10) This was Jesus' attitude toward all of life.

Jesus' shoes were not the worn-out sandals of an aimless wanderer. They were the shoes of a servant of God, and as God's servant, the first thing Jesus does is to walk to the Sea of Galilee to call his first disciples.

And when Peter, Andrew, James and John hear Jesus call them, their response is not slow. Instead they react like runners hearing the starter's pistol crack at the beginning of a race. We read, "*Immediately, they left their nets and followed him.*" (4:20) Their fishermen's sandals are transformed into track shoes. They run to Jesus, so that they can become his followers.

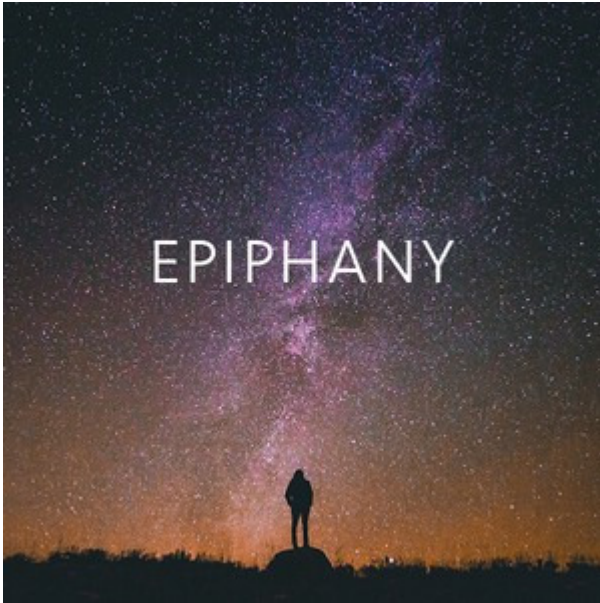
Can you guess what shoes they wore from that point on? Just like Jesus, they wore the shoes of a servant of God. They reordered their lifestyle and priorities, and they followed Jesus – to learn, to train, and to practice their new calling as servants of God.

Jesus calls us, like those first disciples, to follow him.

Our shoes become like his shoes. When we follow Jesus, our shoes become servant of God shoes. We won't be doing the exact same things Jesus did, but, as followers, we will be serving God with the same spirit and with the same wholehearted commitment. Following Jesus means pursuing the paths he leads you to take. This requires turning to the Holy Spirit for guidance and then trusting the direction the Holy Spirit leads. Prayer is essential for us and listening for God's word, to find the courage and strength to follow what we hear.

We are his hands and feet in this world. The truth is that since the day Jesus removed his sandals to ascend the cross, he has no other shoes but ours.

Peace, Pastor John Omans



How is God made known to us today?

Between Christmas and the season Lent (40 days leading up to Easter), the church focuses on a season called “Epiphany.”

As with many of our “churchy” words, the word epiphany comes from the Greek – the original language of the New Testament of the Bible. The word is usually translated in our English, as “appearing.” The word is found in Titus 3:4 (a Bible reading we had on Christmas Day) – “When the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior APPEARED, he saved us, not because of any works that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” Another word for “appeared,” is the phrase “was made known.” Read the above verse and replace “appeared” with “was made known.”

The Day of Epiphany is January 6 and remembers the story of when Jesus made himself known to the wise men. But the “Season” of Epiphany, explores how God, through Jesus, makes himself known to people of every time in history, including us today.

What God is up to in our lives?

How is God made known to us today?

Take some time this month, and share with someone (a friend, a family member, someone else), how the Lord is showing up in your life and making himself known.

BIBLE READINGS FOR UPCOMING SUNDAYS

We begin our series through the Gospel of Matthew. You are invited to read through it, as we grow in faith together.

Series – God made known in Jesus

01/06/19 – Matthew 2:13-23

01/13/19 – Matthew 3:1-17

01/20/19 – Matthew 4:1-17

01/27/19 – Matthew 5:1-20

02/03/19 – Matthew 5:38-48

(Carrie, I changed the theme for January...)