

It's All About Footwear: How the Ruby Red Slippers Represent God's Peace

"Never let those ruby slippers off your feet for a moment, or you will be at the mercy of the wicked witch of the west!"

Those are memorable words from *The Wizard of Oz*. The plot revolved around getting those magic red shoes off Dorothy's feet. But the Wicked Witch was unable to take her shoes. She got zapped when she tried. The only way they could come off her feet was if Dorothy gave them up herself.

We can find many hidden analogies in this story. Let's try a little scriptural spin: Spiritually, the devil is interested in our feet—specifically our footwear.

God provided armor and protective equipment for our life battles, but we must put on each piece ourselves. God isn't going to dress us; we're grown-ups now. The wardrobe includes shoes. They aren't red slippers, but they have spiritual powers nevertheless. "Having your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15) is an echo from Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings good news of happiness, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"

Our shoes of peace guard our hearts, our emotions. Even if all the rest of our armor is in place but we forgot our peace-shoes, fear can overtake us, and we are apt to turn and run in retreat. There isn't any armor for our backs. We are completely vulnerable to the enemy of our souls.

Peace is the valuable spiritual commodity that Jesus gave us after His Resurrection as His final gift before ascending to

the Father. And one size fits all. In John 14:27, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Whenever our Lord appeared to His disciples after the Resurrection, His greeting was "Peace!"

The only way we can lose our peace is if we allow the enemy to take it from us or if we give it away ourselves. Scripture tells us, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7b). We can call upon Jesus to zap the enemy when he approaches to steal our peace.

The devil wants us barefoot without our shoes of peace. He would be happy if we got splinters or stepped on glass—even if we stubbed our toes. He has limited powers, but he can cause a heap of turbulence in his efforts to steal our peace-shoes. He can whip up sudden storms in our lives like came upon us so quickly in 2020 to turn our lives upside down. But "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Now at the close of this year like no other, we can bless the Lord for giving us wisdom and courage to meet every inner upheaval and outside adversity and trial. When we were weak, He lifted us up and carried us through our personal and family afflictions and trials.

God has an ample supply of "peace ... which surpasses all understanding" to keep our hearts and minds, our emotions and our thoughts, on an even keel for the year ahead (Phil. 4:7). He calms our rough seas with His "Peace! Be Still!"

Jesus promised that in this world, we will have tribulation, but we are to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world (John 16:33). Jesus' kind of peace is not the absence of storms in our lives, but peace in the very midst of our turbulence.

Do you remember how Dorothy's story turned out? Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, gave her the magical instructions

which would bring her home. “You’ve always had the power, my dear, you just had to learn it for yourself. [Good advice for God’s children.] Tap the heels of your red shoes together three times. Close your eyes and say, ‘There’s no place like home!’”

That is not the way we get to our heavenly home. Our path to God’s presence is not by wishful thinking nor by a yellow brick road but a golden pathway prepared by Jesus. The three things that will bring us to our eternal home are trust in Jesus as the way, the truth and the life.

Meanwhile, let’s sleep with our shoes on because fears and anxieties lurk in the darkness, and we may be afraid like children of “things that go bump in the night.” Let’s tie our shoestrings tightly together and make a double knot, so our enemy will be foiled in his attempts to snatch and run off with our peace-shoes! Our enemy isn’t the Wicked Witch of the West but the deceiver, the peace-snatching devil. He is after our souls to block our journey to our heavenly home.

Whatever changes and uncertainties loom ahead in the coming year of 2021, let’s keep our shoes of God’s peace firmly on our feet. We may need to exchange our red party slippers for combat boots when the battle rages. We made it with God’s help through 2020, and He will never leave us or forsake us whether our road is yellow brick or uphill all the way.{eoa}

Leona Choy *is among the “gray hairs” still experiencing dreams and visions at 95 years young. She is an author, speaker, publisher and broadcaster.*