

Psalm 121: 1-3

I lift up my eyes to the hills:  
from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord,  
the maker of heaven and earth.

He will not suffer your foot to stumble;  
he who watches over you will not sleep.

Luke 20:27-40

Luke's passage has Jesus talking about marriage and the Resurrection. These can be considered as bookends of his story. From our first bare footprints come the shoes we wear connecting us to our bookends walking with Christ.

One night a man had a dream. He was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand. One belonging to him. The other to the Lord.



When the last scene of his life flashed before him he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed the many times there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times of his life.

Taking our first steps requires courage and trust. Arms outstretched. Face locked in concentration. Face full of giggles. The gentle encouragement from someone nearby. Soon we collapse into loving arms.

What follows are steps both slow and quick. Steps that stop and wait. Steps that rush forwards. Growing into maturity our shoes speak of the places we have been. Work. Rambling. Gym. Holidays. Sport. Leisure. Many more.



As children we outgrow them before their time is up.



As adults we discard them because they are no longer fashionable. Wrong seasonal colour.

Bought in haste, they are uncomfortable.

Sometimes we love them. Even when worn out.



Seeing only one set of footprints really bothered him. He questioned the Lord. "Lord you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."





Sheep in Jesus' day were more like mountain goats. Used to rough barren risky terrain. Walking on the narrowest of ledges. Same applies to our walk on God's mountain.

Whatever the map, whatever the terrain, our walk is a long and difficult one.

There are pebbles to make our feet slip. Boulders to find a way round. Unbridged crevasses to cross.



We need a safety harness. Ropes and nets.



The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of suffering, when you only see one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.

With Christ we start

We carry on walking in

When we need him the most forward.



barefoot.

Christ's footprints.

it is Christ who carries us

On Monday I will offer a reflection on Margaret of Antioch's bookends. When drawn together with Christ's bookends comes the prayer: Today and in all our tomorrows may we select the shoes that arrive where the past, present and future meet. Wearing the same shoes walk in hope towards God. In trust walk knowing God reaches out to each one of us. All the way we have God with his loving arms bringing us home. Amen.