

20240222 Walking in others shoes

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What would it be like to walk in the shoes of royalty? Angela Kelly, the daughter of a dockworker and nurse, knows. She was also the official dresser for the late Queen Elizabeth for the last two decades of the monarch's life. One of her responsibilities was to break-in the aging Queen's new shoes by walking in them around the palace grounds. There was a reason for it: compassion for an elderly woman who sometimes was required to stand for extended periods at ceremonies. Because they wore the same shoe size, Kelly was able to save her some discomfort.

Kelly's personal touch in her care for Queen Elizabeth makes me think of Paul's warm encouragement to the church in Colossae (an area in modern Turkey): "clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12). When our lives are "built on" Jesus (2:7 nlt), we become "God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved" (3:12). He helps us take off our "old self" and "put on the new self" (vv. 9–10)—living out the identity of those who love and forgive others because God has loved and forgiven us (vv. 13–14).

All around us are those who need us to "walk in their shoes" and have compassion for them in the day-to-day challenges of life. When we do, we walk in the shoes (or the sandals) of a humble king—Jesus—who always has compassion for us.