



Jesus and the Cobbler

One of my favorite Christmas stories is about an elderly cobbler who dreamed one Christmas Eve that Jesus would visit him the next day. The dream was so real that he was convinced it would come true.

So the next morning he got up and decorated his shop and sat down to wait for Him.

The hours passed and Jesus didn't come. But an old man stepped inside to get out of the winter cold. As they talked, the cobbler couldn't help noticing the holes in the old man's shoes, so before he left, he reached up on the shelf and gave him a new pair.

Still, Jesus didn't come. But a woman knocked at the door and told him she hadn't eaten that day, and could he spare anything for her family. The cobbler gave her the lunch he'd prepared for himself. Then he sat down again to wait for Jesus.

Instead, he heard a child crying in front of his shop. It was a boy who had been separated from his parents and was lost. This was in the days before telephones, so he put on his coat, locked his shop, and led the boy to his address a few blocks away.

That evening, the cobbler reflected on his day with a twinge of sadness that his dream hadn't come true. *Oh Jesus, why didn't You come?*

And then he seemed to hear a voice saying, *I came three times today. I was the man with the cold feet. I was the woman you gave food to eat. I was the boy on the street.*

Jesus *had* come. And the cobbler had cared for Him without knowing it.

Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You?' 'The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.' (Matthew 25:37–40)

May you and yours have a wonderful and happy Christmas!

-By Ronan Keane

This version was adapted and shortened from Leo Tolstoy's short story "Where Love Is, God Is."

