

REFLECTIONS

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And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17

Shoeshine Philosophy

Jesse was a fixture in the barbershop. He was the main reason I kept going back. I had a favorite barber there, but Jesse gave the place its personality. He offered a really good shoeshine; but Jesse was just fun to be with. While the barber clipped my hair, Jesse would lower his head and put all the energy he had into making my shoes look better than new. All the while he was lathering the saddle soap, pasting the polish, swinging his brushes and popping his rag, Jesse continued a stream of banter about which teams were going to win in the coming weekend rivalries and which players were the best. I really had fun with Jesse. Sometimes I would stop by the barbershop just to enjoy his company.

A recent story in the local paper reminded me of Jesse. The story was about the proprietor of a shoeshine parlor located in one of our city's poorer neighborhoods. The story could have been about Jesse, but the feature of this story was Frank Tyrone Jones. It told about Frank as the proprietor of the place and his philosophy about his trade.

The story told about how he began shining shoes at age seven and how he ventured out into other trades over the years only to return to what he knew the best. It revealed that Frank's life was never a bed of roses. In fact much of his life was embattled by the influence of drugs and alcohol. Then one day, someone who cared about Frank's salvation introduced him to Jesus Christ. And Frank has never been the same.

His encounter with Jesus provided Frank with a new shoeshine philosophy. "When they find me, they stick with me," he says. "I give them Scripture. For those that can't read, I read to them. I'm trying to do as much as I can before my time." Then he added, "Where they go, I go because they're wearing shoes that I shine."¹

Frank's story reminded me of Jesse. Jesse was a bright spot in my life and Frank's shoeshine philosophy tells me why. It doesn't matter whether we speak to crowds with the eloquence of Billy Graham or shine people's shoes like Jesse and Frank Tyrone Jones. In our daily walk, we touch people's lives. Each time they leave us, they walk away with just a little bit of what we gave them. That's the shoeshine philosophy.

And the shoeshine philosophy also offers a gentle reminder that,

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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¹ San Antonio Express-News, February 18, 2007, by Vincent T. Davis

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