

Read: Isaiah 52:7-10

Gus' Song

Isaiah 52:7,10

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

During this special season of Christmas, it's not uncommon to see a group of preschoolers outfitted in their plaid red and black dresses and little suit coats singing the Christmas lullaby, "Be near me Lord Jesus! I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me I pray; bless all the dear children in your tender care and take us to heaven to live with you there!"

That was 2-year-old Gus. One night at bedtime, he asked, "Mom, Dad—can I sing my song?" At first, Gus' parents were unsure which song he was asking for his bedtime prayer. Was it, "Now the Light Has Gone Away" or maybe "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb"? However, when they started singing, "Be near me Lord Jesus" and got to the line, "And take us to heaven," Gus pointed to himself and said "Me! Me!" He took the words to be, "And take GUS to heaven to live with you there."

Gus is correct in realizing that Jesus was born as a baby for *him*! And Gus is absolutely right in realizing that *he* will go to heaven because of Jesus' birth, death on the cross for his sins, and resurrection. The personal assurance we have in our salvation is such a blessing!

However, in our reading for today, we see that Jesus didn't just come for one person but for the whole world. What a day that will be when (vs. 10) "The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations." Together, we will burst into songs of joy with brothers and sisters of all sizes, skin types, and smiles. But how will those people from all nations learn about this wonderful promise? Whether they wear Teva sandals, Nike tennis shoes, Jimmy Choo high heels, or just bare feet, the Bible tells us that the feet of those who bring this good news are beautiful.

Right now, there are missionaries across the world who may not be sitting by a cozy fire, sipping on hot chocolate, and hanging Christmas stockings. Rather, they may be hundreds, even thousands of miles away from these traditions and away from family and friends. And for what reason? Because they have good news to proclaim in all the earth! Glad tidings of great joy!

This Christmas, let's join Gus and sing with confidence, "Take us to heaven to live with you there!"

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What is your favorite bedtime prayer to sing or say?
- Are your feet beautiful? Even if your feet are a little dirty or stinky right now, how can they be beautiful according to the Bible passage we just read?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How many different countries can you name? How are those countries different from where you live? How are they the same?
- What does a missionary do in those countries? Could you be a missionary?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Share a time that you burst into cheer either by yourself or with a team or group of others. Now multiply that feeling times 1,000,000 and that's what it will be like when "the LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations."
- The next time you put on your shoes in front of others—whether it be in a locker room, bowling alley, a beach bench or ice hockey rink—challenge yourself to make your feet beautiful and tell someone around you about what Jesus' birth means to you.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to earth for me! But also, thank you for coming to earth for the whole world. Please use my feet to bring the news of your birth to everyone I meet. Be with our missionaries who may be far away from their families but are doing such important work. Strengthen and protect them. Amen.