



FRIEND OR FOOTSTOOL?

Here are 6 amazing (at least I think they are) foot facts:

- ¼ of all your bones are in your feet. That's 26 bones and 33 joints, each of them vital to the way you walk.
- In a single pair of feet, there are 250,000 sweat glands (some of you are thinking, "There's got to be more!").
- Every pair of feet is different and unique, their size and shape dependant on genetics and environment.
- 75% of us will experience foot problems at one time or another, with women 4 times as likely as men.
- The average person takes 8,000-10,000 steps a day, and walks approx 115,000 miles in a lifetime!
- During an average day, the total forces on your feet are equivalent to those of a fully-loaded cement truck.

I.e. your feet matter to you, my feet matter to me! And they have to work hard. Which means that our feet, much like the rest of us, need a rest sometimes. Need some TLC. They need a *footstool*.

All of which is a lead-in to the Bible passage we're going to look at today:

Matthew 22:41-46

OK, we're in the last week of Jesus' life, and Jesus has just had to face a trio of questions posed by the religious / political parties of 1st century Israel. And these questions have been designed to incriminate Him with His answers. Suffice to say, it backfires spectacularly.

Now, Jesus turns the table on His interrogators. And He presents them, and us, with 3 challenges. Challenges with the power to change our lives, forever:

1) A question we must all answer. The most important question of all, in fact. What is it? This: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?"

Jews of the 1st century were expecting a great King, a King who would make Israel supreme again, and smash their enemies. And this King was called 'Anointed One' or *Mashiach* / Messiah in Hebrew, *Christos* / Christ in Greek. Now Jesus' followers believed Jesus was the fulfilment of that expectation. Israel's leaders didn't.

So essentially, Jesus is asking: "Who am I?"

The subject of identity is huge, particularly, in the 21st century west. And it matters to all of us, not just your Gen-Zs, because our identity gives us a sense of belonging, of purpose, of guidance, of where we fit. But there's also a lot of confusion about identity. Why? Because we've lost touch with the One who put us here.

Jesus, however, knows exactly who He is (Luke 2:49). And because of that, He's qualified to tell us who *we* are. Which is what makes this question so important.

2) A mystery we must all embrace. The Pharisees give the standard Jewish response: "He's the Son of David," as in, a descendant of Israel's greatest king, King David. And they're right (1 Chronicles 17:11-14).

But in response Jesus says, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls Him 'Lord'? If David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?" And then He takes them to Psalm 110. Psalm 110 is a messianic prophecy (the Targums agree). King David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote it. And he refers to this King, this descendant to come, as 'My Lord.' Which is a bit strange. I mean, I love Josh and Abi to bits and I'm hugely proud of them, but you'll never hear me address them as "Milord" or "Milady"!

The point that Jesus is making here is, yes, the Messiah is the Son of David. But He is more than that. He is also the Son of God, in the sense of being the human face of God. Which is why *Yahveh* (God's name in Hebrew) invites *Adoni* ('my Lord') to sit at His right hand – the place where the heir to the throne sits.

He shares the nature and authority of God Himself.

How can God be 1 and more than 1 (3, to be precise)? We might not be able to understand it, but we can embrace it. And we need to. Because our God didn't send an *angel* to save us (Hebrews 1:13). He sent *Himself*.

3) A response we must all make. Jesus reiterates the question, "If then David calls Him 'Lord', how can He be his son?" And the Pharisees go quiet – either because they don't know, or more likely, they don't want to. But that's not the only reason the question is left hanging.

This isn't just a message to them. It's a message to *us*.

What kind of message? Well, it's 1) a warning. The Bible says Jesus has enemies. And those enemies will one day become a footstool for His feet, a poetic way of saying, "He wins!" But 2) it's a promise. Because a day is coming when Jesus will rule this world in righteousness, when oppression and injustice will be gone, forever. And that future is on offer to all of us. But we have to want it and accept it. And that demands a response.

What kind of response? The total surrender kind, from the heart outwards. It's not enough to just 'get' this on an intellectual, theological or philosophical level. We have to recognise who He is. And give our lives to Him.

Because Jesus deserves it. And we need it.

See From His Head ...

So, Jesus is posing these 3 challenges, challenges with the power to change everything. And they lead us to ask a question of our own: "Am I Jesus' friend? Or His enemy?"

But here is the amazingness of Jesus. Because in a sense we are all His enemies: we have all sinned against Him as well as each other. But this King, this Lord, this God we read about in this chapter, loves us enough He was willing to come to earth, live with us, die for the things we've done wrong, then rise from the dead and return to His throne to prepare a future for us (as Paul says in Romans 5:6-8).

Isaac Watts put it this way, in a certain amazing hymn:

*See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?
Nor thorns compose so rich a crown?*

Yes, Jesus is David's King. But He is also his Saviour. And ours, too. But for Jesus' death to make a difference to us, for us to become His friends, we have to respond in a way the Pharisees did not. We have to surrender our lives to the One who bore the sins of the world, in His hands, and in His feet. Have you?