



The Day Shoes Came: Gwembe Valley, Zambia

In the dusty drought of the Gwembe Valley, we sat in the shell of an unfinished building and soaked in the sound of African men and women harmoniously singing, "Lord, I have never seen you disappoint me." These words rang out with strength and conviction from people who have seen the promises of God come alive, even in the midst of great struggles. Today, they gathered to remember the day God brought them shoes.

There was a man at this gathering named Albert. He is a God-loving man who wants each person to understand the meaning of life and hope in Christ. He travels over rough terrain on foot and bike most of his week in order to share God's message of love at each home throughout the Valley. After the singing ceased, Albert stood up and spoke about how receiving a pair of shoes from Soles For Jesus changed his life. "When that container came here," he said, "it was like we were dreaming! It was such a very wonderful present from God." There was captivating excitement in his voice as Albert went on, "Here, we walk on foot. I used to go through 10 pairs of shoes in 2 months. My wife would say, 'what kind of feet do you have?!' Now, I have these shoes, and they are good and strong. I can walk over rocks with no problem. I ride a bike, and they do not break."



The shoes Albert wears enables him to share the Gospel message with his neighbors, a mission that is the very core of the Soles For Jesus. This is only one story of a life that has been changed by this gift of shoes. With beaming smiles on their faces, many others who gathered for worship on this day lifted up their feet to show us their shoes, reminding us that they too were grateful for receiving protective footwear. Some of these people had children in the school next door, and their feet had also been covered with strong shoes from the donation. We were told, in fact, that everyone in the Valley who had shoes, likely received them from Soles For Jesus.



What a joy it is to see, firsthand, how God is the great Provider for these individuals. In His wisdom and mystery, He chooses to love the people of the Gwembe Valley, and many other places in Africa, through us, Americans living thousands of miles away! Giving away shoes seems like such a simple gesture, but the impact of 8,000 shoes in a rural village is enormous. In Albert's words, receiving those shoes "was like heaven raining on Gwembe Valley."

Top: Albert, Gwembe Valley Missionary

Bottom: 2nd grade class at Gwembe Valley School

The stories of Albert and the people of the Gwembe Valley remain close to our hearts as we move forward in daily operations at Soles For Jesus. While preparing for shipments to other countries, we constantly carry in our hearts the desire to "love deeply," just as we have been loved by Christ. It is our mission to continually participate in God's movement to provide shoes and share the reality of Jesus' compassion with our brothers and sisters in Africa.

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8