

In 1979, Mark Inglis began his professional career as a search and rescue mountaineer in a national park in New Zealand. One day, he and his climbing partner were going about their normal business when an intense blizzard trapped both men inside an ice cave. A day passed, and they started to get cold. Another day passed, and they started to feel the grip of ice and snow reaching into their bodies. Another day passed, then another. Their legs and arms started to grow numb. After thirteen days, the search-and-rescuers were themselves rescued. Mark Inglis lost most of both of his legs to frostbite.

But listen to this: Twenty years later, on carbon fiber legs, Inglis returned to that mountain and climbed to the top. Then, in 2006, he decided to try Mount Everest. Things were going well on the way up, until one of his carbon fiber legs broke. They had to fix it with duct tape until someone could bring up a replacement leg from base camp. Finally, on legs not his own, he found his new feet on the summit of Mount Everest. He had overcome every obstacle, and did what most thought impossible, step after step after step.

Your steps may be a little less newsworthy, but they are important, just the same. Mark Inglis gave people with challenges hope and courage to persevere and endure under difficulty. Each one of us has a particular “something” we offer the world. If we didn’t get out of bed in the morning and do our work, other people would not receive what they need. If we didn’t get up and get going, others might not get food or clothing, or the listening ear and emotional support they depend on, or the information they need to learn and grow, or make an informed decision. When the people of the world get up and go to where they are called to serve, things move forward. Things get done. And our lives take on great meaning in God’s grand design.

So—where do your feet take you? Or maybe it would be just as enlightening to ask, where do your feet not take you? There is tremendous power when a person decides to go and do something. We can get on our feet and go do incredible good. But our feet have a way of finding their way to more comfortable spots. It’s not for nothing that we have a phrase, “put your feet up.” Closely related to that is the phrase, “take a load off.” It is so much easier to do nothing and even to justify inactivity by saying, “someone else will do it.” Now, don’t misunderstand me, there is a time for work and a time for rest, and if we skip the rest, we won’t be able to work well. That’s a Biblical fact. What I’m asking you is, could it be that your feet are taking you away from places you should be? Down there in your shoes, you have the ability to get up and go do something great. You walked in here today; that’s an excellent start. The question is, where will you go from here?

As you think about that, consider the feet of Jesus. There are quite a few references to them in the gospels. It seems like people were always falling at Jesus’ feet, which is a posture of total worship. He brought that out of people. Jesus’ feet were famously anointed with expensive, fragrant ointment at a dinner party, not the type of thing that happens every day, but again, an act of devotion and worship, one that was suggestive of his impending death. Jesus could’ve ‘taken a load off’ in the Upper Room, instead, he washed the feet of his disciples, gathering for the

Passover. Then, after giving them the shocking blessing of his body and blood in that Supper, he walked out to the Mount of Olives and waited for Judas' betrayal. When the guards came, he did not resist, but went with them willingly, knowing the path that waited for him in Jerusalem. Those feet walked that path step by step to save you. For every time our feet lead us away from where we should be; for every time we put our feet up instead of going to serve, Jesus walked to the cross for us. Jesus did not put his feet up when the world was counting on him—so the Roman soldiers put his feet up on the cross with hammer and nail. When he died on that cross a few hours later, he could not walk to his grave. Those feet could not move. In death, they were finally still.

On the third day, the day after the Sabbath, some women who were devoted to Jesus were walking to his tomb. They were hoping to perform one last act of loving service to their teacher. They wanted to prepare him for the long, slow decay of death, but gaining access to his remains was going to be a problem—not because of the guards stationed there, but because Jesus had already stepped out. Mount Everest is the toughest climb known to man, but Jesus climbed out of death, which no one else could possibly do. Jesus stood there on resurrected feet and greeted the women. Recognizing him, they fell to those familiar feet in worship. They put their whole selves before him in adoration. If there is a more appropriate response than that, I don't know what it is.

Jesus walked into the total darkness of death and hell for you. It was an intentional journey. He was dying your death. He was punished instead of you. Obediently and willingly. Then, he climbed out of that lonely place. It was the next part of his intentional journey. This time to live your life—to show you what you have to look forward to—life after death in a risen body. Forever life in a risen body, with feet that will run and dance in the kingdom of God.

And of course, the new life that Jesus brings with him is not only a future reality, but the blessings begin now. When you were baptized, Jesus himself came to you, washing, as he does—not just your feet, but your head and your hands as well. Your whole self has been purified. With baptismal water, empowered by the Name of God, you were cleansed and you were called. Do you know what that means?

It means that it is indeed appropriate to worship at the feet of Jesus; it is right to put your whole self before him in adoration, after all that he has done for you. However, it is also true that God has placed a claim on your life. He is calling you to go; to get up, get on your feet, to go to the places he has prepared for you; the simple places, mostly. To go to your home; your family; your community; your job; your circle of friends; and to serve in a way that reflects His service to you. Cleansed and called. Let's walk with Jesus into a new day.