

NEW SHOES for Tillie



By Lindsay Law Wilcox
(Based on a true story)

There is beauty all around when there's love at home
(Hymns, no. 294).

Tillie could hardly contain her excitement. She crunched through the brightly colored autumn leaves with her bare toes, clutching Papa's hand tightly.

"Soon I'll have some new shoes to jump in the leaves with," Tillie thought happily.

Fall had come early this year, and the tanner, Brother Marshall, did not have any leather to make shoes. So when Papa heard that a man had come from Salt Lake City to sell shoes, he was determined to get Tillie and her little sister, Lucy, a new pair for the winter months.

Papa led Tillie and Lucy into the small tent where the man was selling the shoes. Tillie gasped when she looked at the beautiful leather shoes stacked side by side.

Little Lucy clapped her hands as the kind man slipped smooth brown shoes on her feet and tied the laces for her. They were soft on her toes and squeaked a little when she danced around in the tent.

Tillie looked hopefully at the shoe seller, but he shook his head sadly.

"I'm sorry, miss, but I'm afraid I don't have any shoes in your size," he said.

Papa paid the man for Lucy's shoes and thanked him, then led Tillie and Lucy outside.

Tillie choked back tears as she held Papa's hand, trying not to be envious as Lucy ran ahead, stirring up little clouds of dust with the heels of her new leather shoes. She was happy that Lucy had new shoes, but Tillie knew she needed shoes before winter. The days were already growing chilly, and it wouldn't be long until snow came.

When they reached the house, Lucy ran to help Mama with the milking. Papa sat down in his favorite chair and began to untie his tall leather boots. Tillie gasped as Papa picked up a knife and began slicing leather off the tops of his boots. She knew that Papa's boots protected his feet when he worked.

When he finished, Papa handed her the strips of leather.

"Now," he said, smiling, "run over to Brother Marshall's and ask him to make you a pair of shoes."

Tillie threw her arms around Papa's neck and hugged him tightly. Then she dashed out of the house. She reached Brother Marshall's shop and handed him the leather.

"Could you please make me a new pair of shoes?" she asked.

Brother Marshall pulled a stool over for Tillie to sit on and carefully measured her feet.

"All right, Tillie, come back on Friday and your shoes will be ready," he said.

Tillie thanked him and ran back home, scattering leaves happily along her way.

That Friday, Papa and Tillie went to Brother Marshall's shop to get her shoes. She slipped them on, delighted at how warm her toes felt. They looked just like Lucy's shoes, and they even squeaked a little when she walked.

As they thanked Brother Marshall and left the shop, Tillie held Papa's hand and looked at her new shoes. Then she looked at Papa's boots, tied together now so they wouldn't fall down. Tillie felt warm inside. She knew Papa loved her very much.

When they got home, Tillie grabbed Lucy and led her outside. There was a big pile of crunchy leaves that was perfect for jumping into. ♦

"Because love is the great commandment, it ought to be at the center of all and everything we do in our own family."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency

