

## YOUTH SUNDAY



**IT TAKES A VILLAGE by Kelli Upshaw**  
**A CAR IN THE FOG by Elizabeth Morgan**

*Scripture:*

**Luke 10**

38. Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.
39. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying.
40. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.'
41. But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things;
42. there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

**Psalms 77**

4. You keep my eyelids from closing; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
5. I consider the days of old, and remember the years of long ago.
6. I commune with my heart in the night; I meditate and search my spirit:
7. 'Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?
8. Has his steadfast love ceased forever? Are his promises at an end for all time?
9. Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up his compassion?'
10. And I say, 'It is my grief that the right hand of the Most High has changed.'



### **A CAR IN THE FOG**

Good morning. I'm Elizabeth Morgan, and I just graduated from Montgomery High School. I plan to attend University of California at Davis and major in Mechanical Engineering.

I don't know right now whether it's twenty-twenty hindsight, or just a somewhat

foreboding future, but recently every aspect of my past seems simpler than the present. The only metaphor I can think of to express my life right now is *a car in the fog*, shut-in minus a few feet in either direction, pining for the simple guidance of bots-dots or reflector lines.

## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

In life, it's said that of all the great teachers, I've learned the most from experience, and that's what my reflector lines are: past lessons and experiences that keep me on track. But as I drive on in the fog, I'm finding that those lines have dimmed, blurring what's right and wrong and increasing the ambiguity of my own life's intent.

### DAYS OF OLD

Like in Psalm 77, (verse 5), "I look back on the days of old" and I can see a faith that shined through adversity with a stability that never wavered (except for maybe when I had to get up early some Sunday mornings). I never doubted the moral teachings of Christianity or Julia Fenner in Sunday School. But after four years of high school and two of International Baccalaureate History, I've been taught the importance of questioning authority and noticing their imperfections more and more, so the church as an authority in my faith has become part of that doubt. Growing up in the church as a child, I saw it as a safe haven among the drama of elementary and middle school. It was an oasis and a breath of fresh air, but the older I got and the more leadership roles I assumed, the more I realized that I wasn't escaping drama, only finding a new form and medium for it.

In complete honesty, I, as I assume most people at some point in their lives, have been disappointed by the church or the people in it, and in turn I haven't just lost my faith in the church, but my faith in God. In this way, Psalm 77 summarizes my faith's journey and the currently omnipresent doubt that God is all powerful in my life and the lives of others – "It is my grief that the right hand of the Most High has changed." (Verse 10)

A part of me thinks that the lack of faith in my life at times may have a great deal to do with my similarities to Martha in Luke

(Chapter 10:38-42). My life, it seems, is constantly being bombarded with to-do lists and busy work. Whether it's for school, Juice Shack, Girl Scouts, or any number of my seemingly countless extracurricular activities, and, as is the case with many teens and adults in my position, the time necessary to cultivate a strong faith is rarely readily available.

### BALANCING MARY AND MARTHA

I have trouble, like Martha, juggling the importance of simply sitting, listening, and learning from Jesus with the tasks at hand, and while Jesus says that Mary has chosen the better path, (and he's probably right because he usually is), I still question it simply because I don't think Martha is wrong. Someone has to do the laundry, clean the dishes and do all busy work.

And secondly, is it a sin if she simply hasn't found her path to God yet? It's often said that the journey is equally important to the destination, but here I think the destination is of the utmost importance. From what I know, God's disciples weren't judged based on whose path to belief was more or less tumultuous, but that they at some point found themselves sitting like Mary at the feet of Jesus.

### FINDING OUR WAY

For me now, my path, whether it be to Davis, Paraguay or even just tomorrow, is engulfed in fog hiding the benefits or repercussions of every decision I make.

**But I am immeasurably grateful for the Church of the Roses' congregation's willingness to stand by me and the Martha's alike, while we find our way through the fog, knowing, hoping and praying that we will one day find a path that leads us to the feet of Jesus.**

And it's not because you don't know we're lost, but because you want us to find our way as badly as we do.

## Psalm 84

1. How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!
2. My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.
3. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.
4. Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.



### IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Good morning. I'm Kelli Upshaw, and I just graduated from Montgomery High School. In the fall, I will attend Seattle University to study Spanish and Non-Profit Leadership.

There are few greater feelings in life than that of the love of a family; a family that nurtures, cares, encourages, laughs, and endures together. I have been fortunate enough to grow up surrounded by so many that I consider my family, in places that I lovingly call home.

### VALUABLE LESSONS

Psalm 84 says "Happy are those who live in Your house, ever singing Your praise." I have learned countless valuable lessons in the House of the Lord that I could have gained nowhere else, from religious leaders and fellow church members alike, which have brought *me* joy and strength. Verse three reads, "Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." Even majestic animals of flight and constant relocation find a home. The beauty of the traveling soul is the ability to have many homes along its journey. The swallow is busy providing for her young in one haven, until they bravely seek new shelter to teach and raise children of their own. As the stages of our lives shift, also do the places where we feel truly at home. But the link between these dwellings is the constant presence of God's love.

Growing up in the church, I felt God's love most in the endless energy of the congregation.

**Though I have been impacted by sermons through the years, I remember far more Christmas Bazaars, potlucks, Vacation Bible School Camps, and other celebrations, and the generous members who organized them. They donated their efforts in order to allow me to learn about God and the church.**

### MARY AND MARTHA

As I read the story of Martha and Mary, I couldn't help but feel a relation to Mary. I recalled a mission trip to Mexico, when though I was probably needed to help build the house, I chose to speak with the Mexican children and parents about their faith and where they found happiness. Mary yearned for the word of God, and was able to listen because Martha handled the work. The charitable members of Church of the Roses orchestrated so many events so that I, and others in need of His words, could listen at Jesus' feet. To all the "Martha's" sitting in the pews today: "Thank you *so much* for giving your talents for other's benefits."

### SHARING GIFTS

In order for any community to prosper, there must be individuals eager to share their gifts, and willing to help when and where

they are needed. Just as the sparrow's home changes throughout his life, so do our roles as part of the family of Christ. Now, as I prepare to leave for college, I see my position changing. Instead of being a Vacation Bible School camper, I am offering my talents to teach the children.

### **CHANGES**

Earlier this year, I could walk through the halls of Montgomery High School imparting my "wisdom" to freshmen, but now I feel younger than ever and eager to be given guidance. So like the swallow, my home will move 800 miles away to Seattle, but I will carry with me the love of my family at Church of the Roses. And though I once was a "Mary," perhaps it is my time to be a "Martha," and seeing the role models I have here, I couldn't be happier about it.

This family, this congregation, this village, has raised me perfectly. It offers the comfort of home, and the challenge of a journey, the eagerness to learn of Mary, and the helping hand of Martha. We all have a place, or several places, in God's home, and "our hearts and flesh sing for joy to the living God."



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