

HALFWAY



"Halfway Down" **By A.A. Milne**

Scripture:

Psalm 46

1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
2. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
3. though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*
4. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
5. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
6. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.
7. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*
8. Come, behold the works of the LORD; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
9. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.
10. 'Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth.'
11. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

Luke 2

41. Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.
42. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.
43. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.
44. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends.
45. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him.
46. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
47. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.
48. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.'
49. He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'
50. But they did not understand what he said to them.
51. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them.



HALFWAY DOWN

There are some things in life that people cannot do alone. Either it is God helping them along or a community of people. The movie, *Dead Man Walking* is a good example of a man using the support of others to grow within himself. This movie is about a nun named Sister Helen who helps an inmate confront his actions. The inmate is on trial for murder, which he denies until the day before his death. Throughout the movie, Sister Helen is being persecuted for her actions because the victims feel she sided with a murderer. Sister Helen had to help break down this man's barriers and in the end helps him admit his wrongdoings. The man goes as far as to genuinely apologize to the family of the victims. The love of Sister Helen for this inmate helped him become a better person and be at peace with himself.

**Now I haven't killed anyone,
but like Sister Helen to the inmate,
this church has been a support system to me.**

[The song "83" by John Mayer is about a man who is reminiscing about his childhood. This song is appropriate because this time of transition in my life brings up all of my childhood memories. The lyrics to this song are on an insert in your bulletin. (The song was played for the congregation.)]

"83"

By John Mayer

**I've these dreams of walking home
Home where it used to be
And everything is as it was
Frozen in front of me.**

**Here I stand six feet small
Romanticizing years ago
But it's a bitter sweet feeling hearing
"Wrapped Around Your Finger" on the radio.**

**And these days I wish I was six again
Oh make me a red cape I wanna be
Superman.**

**Oh, if only my life was more like 1983
All these things would be more like they
Were at the start of me
Had it made in 83.**

**Thinking bout my brother Ben
I miss him every day**

**He looks just like his brother John
But on an 18 month delay**

**Here I stand six feet small
And smiling cause I'm scared as hell
Kind of like my life is like a sequel to a movie
Where the actor's names have changed
Oh well**

**Well these days I wish I was six again
Oh make me a red cape I wanna be
Superman**

**Oh, if only my life was more like 1983
All these things would be more like they
Were at the start of me
If my life was more like 1983
Plot a course to the source of the
Purest little part of me**

**And most my memories
Have escaped me
Or confused themselves within dreams
If heaven's all we want it to be
Send your prayers to me care of 1983**

**You can paint that house a rainbow of colors
Rip out the floorboards
Replace the shutters but
That's my plastic in the dirt**

**Whatever happened to my
Whatever happened to my
Whatever happened to my lunchbox?
When came the day that it got
Thrown away and don't you think I should
Have had some say in that decision?**

THE CHURCH'S ENCOURAGEMENT

As a child, I never knew what I wanted to be but the church always encouraged me in the things I loved. The church helped me become a good singer and performer through many musicals and Christmas cantatas. I have also been encouraged in my love of dogs and art. Childhood was enjoyable for its simplicity and discovery. The church has always been an outlet of discovery and taking risks.

As I got older, I felt like I needed to return the support and love the church gave me. By building houses in Mexico and helping with Vacation Bible School, I understood the satisfaction people get in helping each other. The community of church began etching my pathway into the future.

MANY LESSONS TO LEARN

Like Jesus, I was curious about learning and discovering throughout my childhood. Jesus scared his parents by staying at the temple and learning about God and religion, but Jesus always knew his path in life. In this morning's Bible passage, Jesus is still a child trying to figure out how to please his parents and seek that which is calling him into adulthood. I am at a similar place in my life, where I want to be an adult, but I still have a lot to learn. I am halfway down the stairs and I have halfway to go. Jesus also has a lot to learn because he is still only a child. Many teenagers feel confident that they know everything in life, but even as adults we have many lessons to learn.

[Now my sister, Allison Rhodes will read *Halfway Down*, a poem by A.A. Milne. The words can be found in your bulletin insert.]

Halfway Down

By A.A. Milne

**Halfway down the stairs
Is a stair
Where I sit.
There isn't any
Other stair
Quite like
It.
I'm not at the bottom,
I'm not at the top;
So this is the stair
Where
I always
Stop.
Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up,
And isn't down.
It isn't in the nursery,
It isn't in the town.
And all sorts of funny thoughts
Run round my head:
"It isn't really
Anywhere!
It's somewhere else
Instead!"**

THE FUTURE

Looking into the future, I have so many ambitions. I want to travel and study abroad. I still want to have a lot of fun. I love going to concerts and living a carefree life. Hopefully, I will adopt a new community in San Francisco that will teach me something I have not yet learned. Maybe children will be my next teachers by learning patience and kindness from them. Even as a child, Jesus was a teacher to his parents and the elders in the temple.

I think that I have learned many lessons from the church and I hope that I have been a teacher in some ways, like Jesus.

This church has helped my transition into college life by helping me feel confident and ready for new challenges. John and Kate have pushed me beyond my limits in such a positive way. They have dared me to go beyond my comfort zone with public speaking, singing, and leadership skills. These tasks have helped me become more prepared for the difficult school and work ahead of me. Working with the Worship and Arts Committee has helped teach me responsibility. I have been given opportunities to be creative, but also to take on jobs by myself like buying and arranging the flowers. This seems like a simple task for many adults, but there are few times where I take on a project by myself.

ALWAYS IN MY HEART

These responsibilities help me prove to myself that I can be a "Big-Kid," well actually Young Adult, and that I can figure out my life on my own. When I get worried or scared, I must remember I have my church community to come home to and, of course, I always have God. "Be still and know that I am God" – that message will always be in my heart just like the church family who taught it to me.

[In closing, I'd like to play "*First Day of My Life*" by Bright Eyes. This song is about a man singing of the love he has for a woman, but I like to think of it as my love for God. This man is encountering a new chapter in his life just as I am by going to college. "I realize that I need you" is similar to the connection the inmate in *Dead Man Walking* felt for God in his last days of life.]

Thanks for being my church community.

**BRIGHT EYES LYRICS
"First Day of My Life"**

**This is the first day of my life
I swear I was born right in the doorway
I went out in the rain suddenly everything changed
They're spreading blankets on the beach**

**Yours is the first face that I saw
I think I was blind before I met you
Now I don't know where I am
I don't know where I've been
But I know where I want to go**

**And so I thought I'd let you know
That these things take forever
I especially am slow
But I realize that I need you
And I wondered if I could come home**

**Remember the time you drove all night
Just to meet me in the morning
And I thought it was strange you said everything changed
You felt as if you'd just woke up
And you said "this is the first day of my life
I'm glad I didn't die before I met you
But now I don't care I could go anywhere with you
And I'd probably be happy"**

**So if you want to be with me
With these things there's no telling
We just have to wait and see
But I'd rather be working for a paycheck
Than waiting to win the lottery
Besides maybe this time is different
I mean I really think you like me**

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