

GETTING PAST THE HALFWAY POINT

Just a few days ago we came to the halfway point of 2024. Our chiropractor commented last week how amazed he was at how quickly these past six months have gone. Perhaps many of us feel the same way. Halfway points like we are in right now in 2024 are often a good time to stop and do some reflecting. Jesus used the halfway point in His three year ministry to have the disciples begin reflecting upon their understanding of who He was. Jesus started off by asking them, "**Who do people say I am?**" They replied how some thought He was John the Baptist, others felt He was Elijah, and still others considered Him to be one of the other prophets. Then Jesus asked, **But who do you say I am?**"

This question was meant to teach how it is not enough for us just to know what others say about Jesus, but that we must come to recognize for ourselves that He is the Messiah. Through this lesson Jesus was teaching how we cannot remain at a halfway point when it comes to our commitment, adoration, and faith in Him. He wants us to move past the halfway point by being fully committed to following Him.

Now that we are at the halfway point of 2024, I thought it would be a good time to follow in Jesus' example and use it as a time for reflection. I hope that we have already passed the halfway point by turning our curiosity about Jesus into adoration and true love for Him. A deeper question for us to consider is whether we have passed the halfway mark when it comes to walking in faith, keeping our focus on Him always, and no longer having doubts? Perhaps a story that took place halfway across the Sea of Galilee will help answer these questions for us.

After Jesus miraculously fed the crowd of 5,000 with just five loaves of bread and two fish, He sent the disciples off in the boat to sail that night across the Sea of Galilee while He went off to pray in solitude. A strong wind began to develop causing the disciples to fight against heavy waves in their journey across. By 3:00 a.m. they were only about halfway across the Sea of Galilee, still far from shore. Jesus could see from where He was praying that they were in trouble. Miraculously Jesus walked out on the water in the middle of the night and in the midst of that severe storm to where the disciples were.

The disciples were terrified with fear in the midst of the storm and at first did not recognize the figure approaching them was Jesus. Peter called to Jesus

and said, "**Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.**" When Jesus said, "**Yes, come,**" Peter acted in faith by getting out of the boat and he walked on the water, too. When Peter took his eyes off Jesus and began to focus on the strong wind and waves instead, he lost faith and began to sink requiring Jesus to save him. After grabbing him, Jesus said to Peter, "**You have so little faith. Why did you doubt me?**"

This story that took place at the halfway point on the Sea of Galilee provides for us many things to reflect upon in our relationship with Jesus. For instance:

- do we have both feet out of the boat so to speak and are we fully committed to walking in obedience toward Jesus, or are we still just halfway in and keeping one foot still in the boat?
- do we keep our focus on Jesus always or, like Peter, are we still at the halfway point and taking our eyes off Him at times?
- do we have a strong faith consistently or are we only halfway there and still struggling with doubts?

These are very important questions for us to reflect upon in our spiritual journey with the Lord. This halfway point in 2024 is a perfect time for us to look at these aspects of our faith to see if we are moving forward or are remaining stuck at the midway point. If we are still only halfway to where we want to be, let us use the next six months to make the efforts needed to get past this marker and get closer to Jesus by keeping our eyes always focused on Him.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean