



HILLSIDE MONTHLY DISPATCH

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

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Modeling the Truth of God's Word

July 2021

FOLLOWING JESUS FULLY

From the Pastor's Desk

Do You Have a Faith That Only Goes Halfway?

Luke 9:57-62

Here we are already, halfway through the year 2021. Such recognition generally draws out the clichés that one's mind can muster, but I will spare you from them in this article.

Life is full of halfway points, isn't it? Children count the years till they graduate and all the while marking halfway points through grade school, middle school, and high school. College students mark the time till they graduate with a degree and the halfway point is an important milestone in their work. Many individuals at their place of employment live by deadlines and are pressured to complete tasks that are often first measured by the halfway point of completion to determine how much longer it will take to finish.

All of this to say that it's okay to mark such things by the halfway point. Psychologically it helps an individual to relieve themselves of the pressure and burden of carrying the entire weight of any given project. Emotionally many people like to mark the halfway point of something because it releases tension, strain, and anxiety about not being finished. Determining the HALFWAY point of anything in life enables the person to determine the length of time it may take to complete what still remains to be finished.

Though it is good to take stock at a halfway point of something important in your life, it isn't okay to stop there and declare success. No student halfway through high school, say at the end of the sophomore year, can declare he or she is finished when he or she still has two grades to go. The school department will not let such a person get away with it. No assembly line worker at the Ford plant can look at an F-150 with just the engine and body completed and declare the truck is finished. That person would be fired.

Just like no one would declare that on July 1, 2021 that the remaining twenty-six weeks are not necessary so let's start 2022. Halfway is not completion. Halfway still leaves things undone. Halfway in any part of life is not permissible. This is true in life and also true in our faith.

I am reminded of a particular passage in which Jesus laid down the parameters for following Him. The passage I am referring to is found in Luke 9:57-62. The passage starts off with an unnamed individual who rushes up to Jesus and

Upcoming Events and Meetings

July 4 – Independence Day

May the Star-Spangled Banner continue to wave "o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

July 4, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School and Bible Discussion

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. – Weekly Bible Study

We are continuing to discuss verse 3:16 in each book of the Bible.

declares, "I will follow You wherever You go." To which Jesus responds to the would-be disciple, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." It is an interesting response from the Lord to the man, but it was likely words that were meant to shake the man into the reality of Jesus' situation.

Though Jesus seemed to live a glamorous existence with throngs of people following Him, religious leaders coming to Him, and miracles galore performed by Him, He painted the picture that wherever He goes there is no rest for Him. To follow Jesus means to be one who gives himself or herself fully to Him.

Well as soon as Jesus said that to the unnamed man, He turned to another who must have overheard the exchange and said to that man, "Follow Me." To which the man in response said to Jesus, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." Seems reasonable doesn't it? Unless you believe in an amazing coincidence that the man's father just happened to die within these moments, the request isn't as reasonable as it may seem on the surface.

Remember in that culture when a person died, they buried them quite quickly, generally within a day, due to heat and the fact that they did not embalm their dead. So if the man was in the presence of Jesus, then he either had already

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On the web at <http://www.hillside-sbc.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

buried his father who had already died and needed no longer to perform the task, or he just got word his father was dead and it needed to be done ASAP, or maybe it was just an excuse to delay because the father is old and he wanted to go back and care for him until the day he died and would be released from the duty of a son to then follow Jesus.

When you stop and consider the moment it is likely some amalgamation of the third one. So Jesus recognizing the man's response for what it was – an excuse – He said to the man, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." Meaning, when it comes to following Me, there is no halfway, there is no middle ground, you are called to the work of the Gospel, now be about that work and let nothing, no excuse, prevent you from fulfilling that calling.

Upon hearing Jesus' words another piped up and declared to the Lord, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say goodbye to those at home." It seems that this person overheard what Jesus said to the man who tried to excuse himself from the call and wanted to go and instead of waiting for family to die, just simply bid them goodbye.

But Jesus would not have this man's halfway either, for He said to the man, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Jesus required of His disciples immediate full obedience and submission to Him.

This reminds me of His calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John at the Sea of Galilee and it also reminds me of His calling of Levi (Matthew) at the tax collecting table. In both instances Jesus simply told them to follow Him and they gave no excuses, no halfway commitment, they immediately and obediently got up and followed Him.

Where in your life are you giving Jesus a halfway commitment? Is your Christian moral code only halfway righteous? Is your faithfulness and duty to the Lord only a halfway commitment? Is your decision to honor Jesus as your Lord and not just your Savior a halfway, half-hearted obedience to His call?

Let me share something with you based on this passage today. Halfway is the same as no answer to the call whatsoever. Halfway is failure to the Lord. Why? Because He has given His whole self to the call of being the Savior of the world. Aren't you glad that Jesus didn't come halfway to earth? Aren't you full of joy that Jesus didn't honor God halfway in His ministry? Aren't you elated that Jesus didn't go halfway to the cross? For in all these areas if He hadn't gone all the way, then there would be no salvation for you and me. Jesus gave it all and he expects our all in return as the people that He has redeemed.

Are you holding back in any way? Are you resisting the leading of the Lord in your life? Do you tend to keep yourself guarded from Him? Then stop holding back, stop going to Him only halfway, go all the way so that He will complete the work in you that He is doing to full maturity. Following Jesus fully in every area of our lives is the Christian call to complete obedience.

✠ Pastor Jim

Property and Space Patrol

Hillside has procured a new John Deere Zero Turn Lawn Tractor. It's painted a nice "John Deere Green." This became necessary since Pastor Al is no longer able to maintain the property. We thank God for his many years service to keep the property and grounds in good condition. We ask you to prayerfully consider whether you feel led to fill that position or volunteer to help with lawn care.

Pastor Jim got a good deal on a mower with a 54-inch deck and did not need to take out a loan. The mower was paid in full by an anonymous donation. Praise God for that major blessing!

Memorable Dates in July



This month we celebrate the foundational dates for our country. It was a time when faith in God was strong, particularly among our national leaders, but today it is under assault from atheists and political leftists who think it is better to trust in government than Almighty God.

For example, two years ago, in June 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a petition by atheists to remove "In God We Trust" from all U.S. currency. That phrase originated on coinage in 1864 due to increased religious sentiment. It does not establish a government religion but declares a spiritual truth.

Here are the significant dates in historical order:

July 3, 1775 - During the American Revolution, George Washington took command of the Continental Army at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

July 5, 1775 - The Continental Congress adopted the Olive Branch Petition expressing hope for a reconciliation with Britain. However, King George III would not even look at the petition and instead issued a proclamation that the colonists were in a state of open rebellion.

July 2, 1776 - The Continental Congress in Philadelphia adopted the following resolution, originally introduced on June 7, by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia:

"Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved. That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign Alliances. That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation."

July 4, 1776 - The Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress. A copy was sent to King George as an FYI.

July 8, 1776 - The first public reading of the Declaration of Independence occurred when Colonel John Nixon read it to an assembled crowd in Philadelphia.

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July 9, 1776 – With British troops massing around New York City, George Washington ordered the Declaration to be read to troops assembled there.

July 2, 1788 - The United States Constitution was ratified by the required nine states out of the original 13.

July 4, 1826 – Former Presidents Thomas Jefferson (83) and John Adams (90), the last surviving members of the original American revolutionaries, died unexpectedly on the same day within five hours of each other. They died on the 50th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence.

In God We Trust



This story comes from the "Our Daily Bread" devotional booklet. The focal scriptures are from Isaiah 30:1-5 and 15-18. Read that passage and then continue with the story about an incident during the American Revolution, written by ODB writer James Banks.

In the early days of the American Revolutionary War, an expedition was launched against British forces in Quebec. When the expedition passed through Newburyport, Massachusetts, on the way to Canada, they visited the tomb of the renowned evangelist George Whitefield. Whitefield's coffin was opened and his clerical collar and cuffs were removed. The clothing was cut in pieces and distributed in the mistaken belief that it could somehow give the soldiers success.

The expedition failed. But what the soldiers did demonstrates our human tendency to trust in something less than a relationship with God—money or human strength or even religious traditions—for our ultimate well-being.

God cautioned His people against this when invasion from Assyria threatened, and they sought Pharaoh's help instead of turning from their sins and turning personally to Him: "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. You said, "No, we will flee on horses." Therefore you will flee!' " (Isaiah 30:15–16).

Their "expedition" failed as well (just as God said it would) and Assyria overwhelmed Judah. But God also told His people, "The Lord longs to be gracious to you."

Even when we have trusted in lesser things, God still holds out His hand to help us return to Him. "Blessed are all who wait for him!" (v. 18).

Tune in to Gospel Radio

In the Concord area, get more of God's Word by tuning into New Hampshire Gospel Radio at 99.1 FM or 104.3 FM. For example, on Saturday nights at 6 p.m. the locally produced "Saturday Night Gospel Hour" offers a wide variety of southern and country gospel music. During the week, tune into well known speakers such as Alistair Begg, Chuck Swindoll, Dr. David Jeremiah, and Dr. Jim Daly.

Learn more at <http://www.nhgr.org/>.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating another orbit around the Sun:

7/19 Frank Dawson

7/21 Florence Omar

7/22 Gabriel Davis



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on any people who are celebrating a wedding anniversary this July. If that is you, let the editor know about it so we can celebrate it with you..

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It is our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillside-sbc.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is July 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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