

Life in the Back Row of Church

There are things that bring back very vivid memories for me—some painful, some not.

This evening I was playing through some praise music I found in my organizing spree, and I began to play “Mighty to Save.”

Everyone needs compassion

Love that's never failing

Let mercy fall on me

Everyone needs forgiveness

The kindness of a Savior

The hope of nations

Savior He can move the mountains

My God is mighty to save

He is mighty to save

Forever Author of salvation

He rose and conquered the grave

Jesus conquered the grave

So take me as You find me

All my fears and failures

Fill my life again

I give my life to follow

Everything I believe in

Now I surrender

(Ben Fielding & Reuben Morgan, Hillsong Publishing, 2006)

It brought me back to the last Sunday I stood next to my husband in church. We were on the last row. That was an unusual place for us to be, way in the back. It was OK. I wanted to be back there too.

It was a weird Sunday all the way around.

Standing back there with a clear view of all the people I'd worshipped with for years, I found myself feeling like I no longer belonged. Only a handful of people knew the tragedy that was occurring in my family. Most of these dear people had no idea. I felt like a sham.

A friend commented on my weight loss—she asked how I was doing it like she wanted to do it too. I stood speechless. What could I say? “It’s a very effective diet, but I absolutely don’t recommend it. It’s called the Adultery Diet—you are so full of pain, there is no place for food.”

As worship began, I stood barely touching my husband. He very clearly did not want to be there—did not want to be next to me either. I felt helpless and hopeless.

“Mighty to Save” started. I knew these words by heart. This song had to be for us. For both of us.

I inched closer to my husband and slipped my hand in his. Although he allowed me to hold his hand, he did not hold mine back.

That summed up our marriage at that point. I was holding tightly, with fingers grasping for any sign of warmth. Even

while I held firmly to his cold hand, I felt my palms sweating from fear of the future alone.

I sang those words, begging God to make those words ours. Love that never fails. Mercy, forgiveness, kindness, hope.

Oh, God, please, please move mountains in my husband's heart. God, You are mighty to save. You are the author of my salvation. You are the author of his salvation. Please remind him of the joy of his salvation. Jesus, You conquered the grave. Jesus, please conquer the death of my marriage. God, take me as You find me. Please, God, I have more fears than I thought possible, and the failure of my marriage is devastating me. I give You my life, Jesus. I give You everything I believe in, everything I have hoped in and hoped for. I surrender, God. God, please.

It would be easy to say that God did not answer that prayer, because, well, He kinda didn't. But I surrendered to Him. I put my trust in Him as I sang those words.

I understood that the love that never fails is His. It's Him. He never fails. He had offered me mercy, kindness, forgiveness and hope in my Savior. He did move mountains, just not the mountain in my husband's heart. He could have, but for some reason He chose not to—and I trust Him. He took me as He found me—broken, hurt, bleeding and terrified—and He filled my life again.

He has filled my life with more beauty than I could imagine. I will not pretend that this life He has called me to is at all easy, but it is blessed.

Each day I see the blessings. Each day I know the beauty of His provision. Each day I sense His power sustaining me. Each day I feel the depth of His love.

I wouldn't trade where God has brought me. I wouldn't trade what He has done in my life. I wouldn't trade knowing His

faithfulness for anything.

There are days when I complain and moan and groan and wail, but ultimately I know that He loves me. He will take care of me and my children.

He is indeed mighty to save.

Sue Birdseye *is an author and single mom of five kids that range from 4 years old to 17 years old. This article is adapted from her blog, .*