

Belonging: 5 Keys to Unlock Your Potential as a Disciple

Week 2: Trust

Overview

John 4: 1-42 - The Woman at the Well

Week 1: John 4:1-6 - Intro and Discomfort

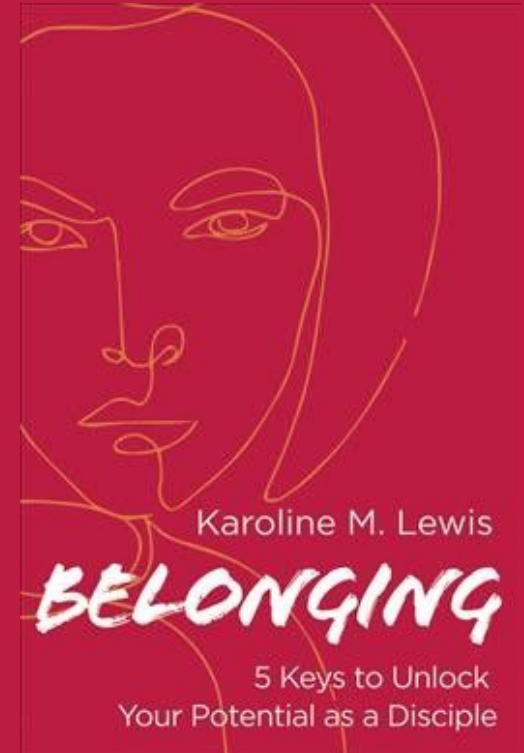
Week 2: John 4: 7-15 - Wonder

Week 3: John 4: 16-24 - Trust

Week 4: John 4: 25-30 - Letting Go

Week 5: John 4: 31-42 - Witness

THESIS: Discipleship is less about doing and more about belonging.



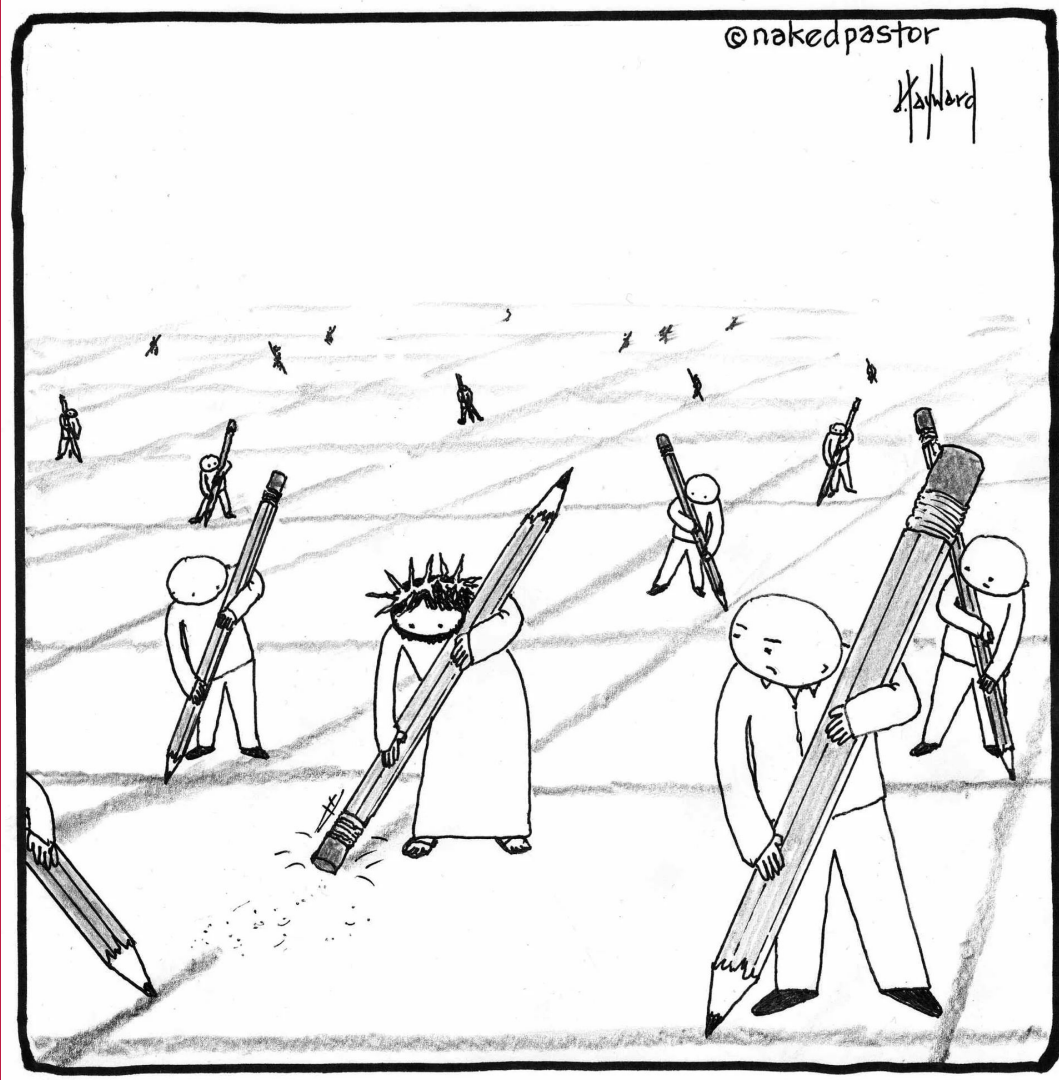


Recap: Discomfort

- John 4:4- “But he HAD to go through Samaria.”
- “Going to Sychar is an essential part of faith if we are to realize fully what it means that God so loved the world, and especially if you have forgotten how much God loves you. ‘It is necessary to go through Samaria’ to find ourselves once again and to be found again by the one who loves us so much.”

Recap: Wonder

- Openness and wonder are hugely important in faith.
- A signpost before Bible stories: “Questions and curiosity encouraged.”
- To admit that you can’t do it alone is to admit that you don’t want to be alone. But that’s what relationship is all about. And that’s what God most desperately wants - and with YOU.

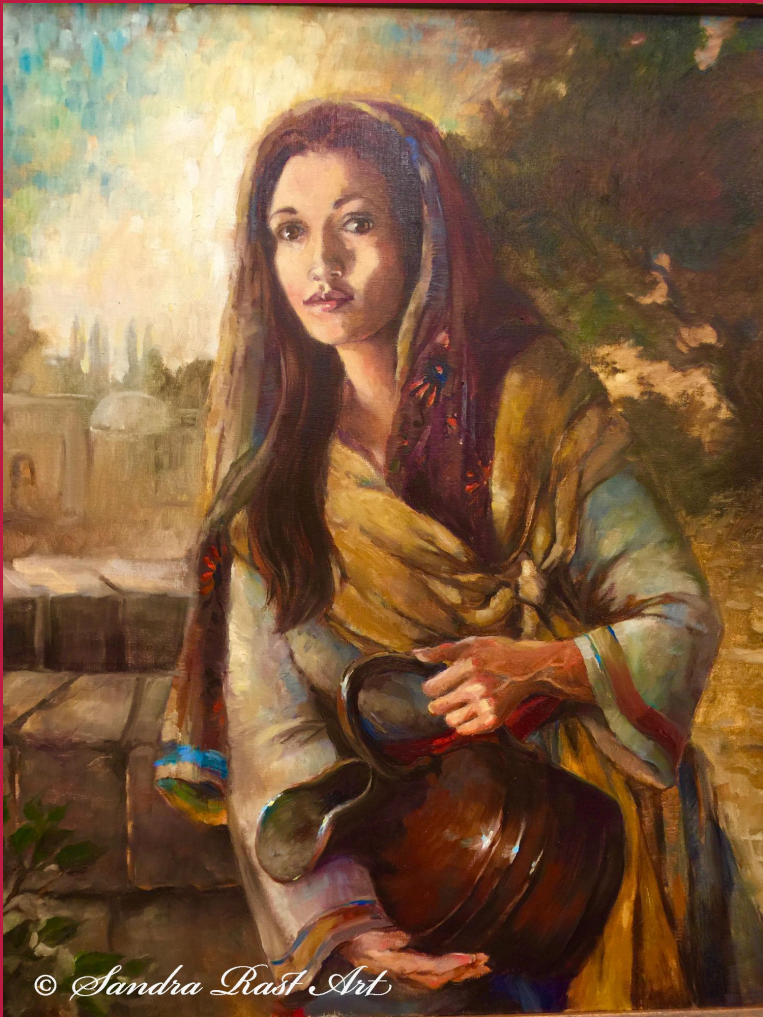


Focus Verses: John 4:16-24

16 Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' 17 The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' 19 The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' 21 Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'

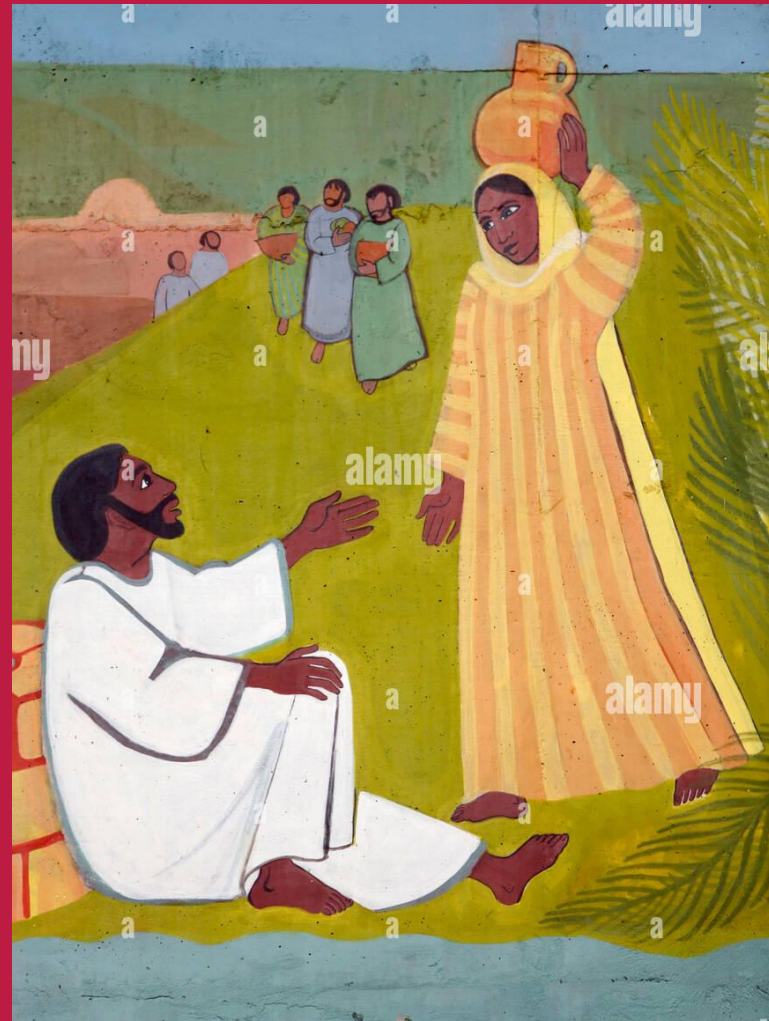
Speaking Her Truth: John 4:16

- “Go, get your husband, and come back here”
Tone is everything - How do you read this line?
 - How we read this “tells us a lot about who we think Jesus is - and how we think Jesus might interact with us.”
- “If Jesus’ request of the woman at the well comes from Jesus’ heart - an understanding heart and not trying to humiliate, a heart full of love and not pity, a heart filled with empathy and not seeking to embarrass”
- She answer honestly
- Jesus knows her truth. He wants her to recognize him as the Truth
- How does history remember the woman at the well?
- What have you heard previously about the woman at the well? How is the woman at the well portrayed today?



- Historical truths
 - She had no control over the fact that she had been married 5 times
 - Men could divorce his wife for the smallest of reasons, women could not instigate divorce
 - Women were totally dependent on a male provider
- Therefore she had 5 husbands, not of her own doing, but because they either died, leaving her widowed or divorced her
- What do you think is the most likely reason for men to divorce women at this time was?
- What was the primary motive for marriage in the ancient world?

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- Imagine for a minute the cloud of disgrace under which the woman at the well lived.
- She was incapable of fulfilling the one thing she was, at the time, put on earth to do - have children.
- How does this change your understanding of the this story?

- Here current living situation would have only exacerbated her guilt, pain, and shame.
- No such thing living together in the ancient world
- Likely at “levirate marriage”

- Remember wells are betrothal sights
- While Jesus and the woman at the well are not getting engaged here, we now realize that Jesus is offering her a relationship that she has never had, a partnership with him in which she will never again be abandoned or discarded.

He's a prophet: John 4:19

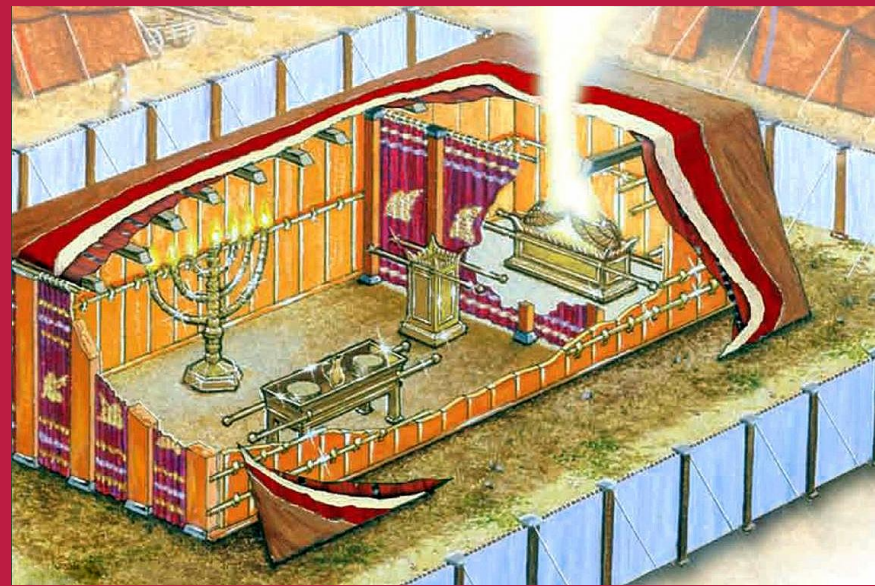
- She moves a step closer to her realization who Jesus is - a prophet
- Why? Because he knows her truth
- Old Testament prophets predicted the future because they were about to assess the and the present
- Prophets also voiced words of hope and encouragement
- When the relationship between God & the Israelites appeared to be going awry that's when God sent God's prophets-to bring God's people back to God toward reconciliation, mercy, & steadfast love
- Jesus knows her plight, not her sin. Jesus never says she sinned nor does he forgive her.
- Sin in the gospel of John does not have to do with one's morals but rather that you are apart from God or not in relationship with God/Jesus

Where is God: John 4:21

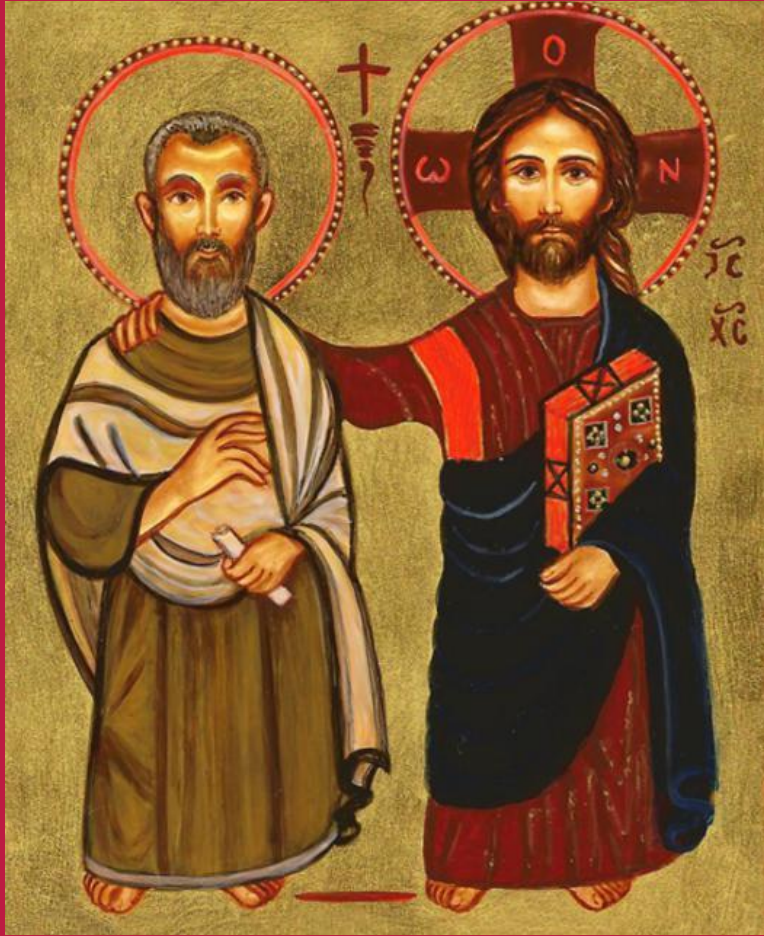


- She is not deflecting or changing the subject. Question of where to worship God is bigger than our modern ears understand
- Jews temple is in Jerusalem, Samaritan temple is on Mount Gerizim
- Where to worship God is the question at the heart of the Samaritan/Jewish divide & is Jesus is a prophet he will know the answer

- Why is this answer so important
- Because God literally dwelled in the innermost part of the temple, the Holy of Holies
- Temple and Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE leaving the a theological crisis: WHERE IS GOD
- For the Gospel writers the answer is Jesus. Jesus if God's presence among us here and now 0 no longer in the temple.
- "Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you & your people will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" (4:21)



- True worship means recognizing that is Jesus, God is standing before you
- Jesus wants her to see he is the temple now.



Our Truth

- It can be hard for us to tell the truth, to share our truth with others, especially with Jesus. And with Jesus, there is no shaming or blaming, which our society likes to do. Instead, Jesus has only compassion for her - and for us.
- Think to yourself, what truths about yourself are you hoping Jesus doesn't know, doesn't find out?
- What difference might it make to remember that Jesus is aware of the truths we hide and loves us regardless?
- How might you live differently?
- Would you talk to Jesus more if you remember that Jesus has only concern and love for you, like the woman at the well?

Bible as Weapon

- Have you ever experienced a time when the Bible was used against you - to judge or condemn your behavior, or even to judge who you are?
- WHY was it important for that person, church, or group to say that about you or about someone else, and what does it communicate about who they think God is?
- We don't have to show up at every argument to which you are invited.
“When someone spews something really hurtful don't pick it up & hold it & rub it into your heart & snuggle with it & carry it around for a long time. Don't even put energy into kicking it to the curb. You gotta see it & step OVER it or go AROUND it & keep on going.” - Brene Brown





Speaking our Truth

“Sometimes you just need to talk about something, not to get sympathy or help, but just to kill its power by allowing the truth of things to hit the air” (Karen Salmansohm)

- How does the honest and trusting interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman illustrate a different approach?
- Does it help or give you hope?

Trusting is Hard

Relationship is at the heart of who we are as humans and, according to John, at the heart of discipleship. This is what Jesus offers in John - not a how-to manual for faith, not a list of commandments for how to get into heaven, but an intimate & lasting relationship with him that finds its truest expression in trust and love

- Trust takes time and effort
- In what relationship do you have trust?
- What does it mean for you to trust Jesus?
- What do you trust God for and about?



Which resonate with you and Why?

“The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.”

- Ernest Hemingway

“Trust is very Hard if you don't know what you're trusting.”

- Marianne Williamson

“What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?” - George Eliot

“Trusting is hard. Knowing who to trust, even harder.” - Maria V. Snyder

“Learning to trust is one of life's most difficult tasks.” - Isaac Watts

Trust

- Discipleship is relationship.
- One way we can define discipleship is “sustaining a relationship with Jesus.”
- Relationships don't just happen, and they do not grow & deepen without our attention to them.
- Maybe her asking can help us ask, “God, where are you?” trusting that God will respond, “right here.”
- In asking, the woman finds belonging. A kind of belonging she has never experienced.
- A kind of belonging that gives her a kind of connection, a kind of intimacy she has never known.
- A kind of belonging whereby she is deeply seen.

Trust

- In this portion of the conversation, we experience her ability to trust
- She trusts Jesus with her truth.
- She trusts Jesus with her questions.
- This kind of belonging actually changes who you are and who you think you can be - from useless to witness, from outcast to disciple, from left behind to deeply, truly, and abundantly loved.
- When we are seen, we can trust.
- To sense belonging, to know belonging, is to rest in mutual trust - the thirst key to unlocking your potential as a disciple of Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, oh how easy it is to allow our trust in you wane. We get caught up in the “have tos” of faith, forgetting that what you want from us begins simply with who we are with you. Help us to lean fully into that trust - a trust that gives the courage to ask the hard questions, to share our truth, and to see in ourselves what you already see. Amen
