

Belonging: 5 Keys to Unlock Your Potential as a Disciple

Week 4: Letting Go

Overview

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

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

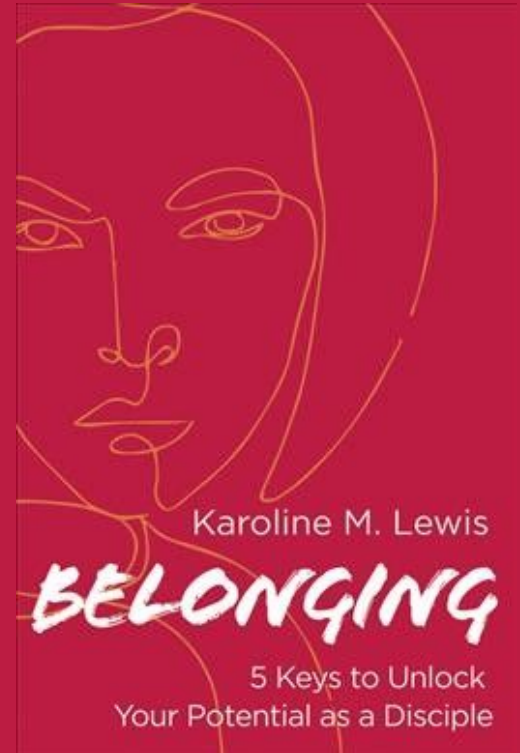
Week 2: John 4: 7-15 - Wonder

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: Trust

I wonder...

Who is your biblical person?

“That character who embodies for us what believing in God looks like and feels like. In them:

- +we see aspects of ourselves
 - +better able to articulate what faith means in our own lives
 - +gain a better sense of who God is calling us to be
 - +see who God is because God showed up in their lives”
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Focus Verses: John 4:25-30

25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

27 Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” 28 Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 29 “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” 30 They left the city and were on their way to him.

The Conversation Connects: John 4:25

The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”

- She makes a connection between what Jesus is telling her and who she knows God to be.
 - Samaritans expected a Messiah who would overthrow the rule of the Roman Empire and restore Palestine to its past glory.
 - It’s a hope rooted in God’s faithfulness to deliver once again God’s people from oppression.
- Palestine was a Roman province, annexed by the Roman Empire, and all were colonized people.
- How do John and other Gospel writers reconcile the preconceptions of the Messiah with who Jesus actually was?

The Conversation Connects: John 4:25

The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”

- How do John and other Gospel writers reconcile the preconceptions of the Messiah with who Jesus actually was? That Jesus would be crucified?
 - Roman crucifixion was used as a deterrent, where they placed the crosses with dead and dying bodies outside the gates of Jerusalem.
 - Jewish law: anyone hanged on a tree considered cursed (Deut 21:22-23)
- For John, Jesus was Son and God more than Messiah.
- The woman states shared hope in the Messiah, moving a step further in recognizing who Jesus is.
 - Only other recognition of Messiah is Andrew in ch 1.
 - But she is not disciple, religious leader, Jew, insider, man. Yet she sticks with the conversation.

Jesus' Response: John 4:26

Jesus said to her, "I am, the one who is speaking to you."

- To a Samaritan woman, Jesus reveals his true identity.
 - Mutual, truth-telling conversation: I don't have a husband // I Am
 - Jesus wanted her to know the truth about him, to see him.
- I AM = ego eimi.
 - Not just I am the Messiah - but I am the same God who spoke at the burning bush (Exodus 3:13-15)
 - I am statements with predicate nominative; this is one without.
 - First time in John - to religious outsider, a woman with no name.



- Have you ever had an awe-filled moment before God?
- What is your response to imagining God revealing God's very self to you?
- What if, instead of hiding from God, hoping that God doesn't see us for who we really are, we trust in God's love regardless?

Leaving the Jar Behind: John 4:28

Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city.

- Because she was going to come back and get it?
- She was so excited that she forgot?
- What else could the water jar signify: shame, rejection, loneliness, guilt, dejection?
- Could it be that what she leaves at the well is the identity the world has placed upon her?
- New identity in Christ
 - Not five time loser - but testifier
 - Not one to pity - but one to trust
 - Not the barren one - but now the reborn one

Jesus needs her witness. Jesus needs our witness.

- Are we too frightened to share what we know about God?
- What are we afraid of - rejection, being laughed at, having our shaky faith challenged?
- Can we let go of those fears?
- Who are you, reborn in Christ?



Come and See: John 4:29

*“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!
He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”*

- She invites her own townspeople to their own encounter with Jesus with the exact same words Jesus uses in John 1: “Come and see.”
- The invitation embodies John 3:16 as she herself has experienced this love.
 - For John - invitation is the testimony of the ideal witness - one who encounters Jesus, learns who He is, and invites others to find out for themselves.

Come and See: John 4:29

*“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!
He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”*

- John recasts our views of evangelism
 - Not tracts or someone convincing us of the only way
 - Witnessing & inviting
 - Testifying & summoning
- “Come and see” - John 21:12 - breakfast on the beach
- “Come and see” - to see, taste, smell, hear, and touch God in the flesh



- She had to let go of the jar - of expectations, of what she has always known.
- What do you need to let go, to leave behind?
- What are those things weighing you down? Those buckets that say you are not worthy, not enough, that put you in a box.

Is He the One?: John 4:29



“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”

- The syntax in Greek invites a negative answer. She is still not entirely sure.
- We don't walk away from encounters with God with all of the answers.

“The more certain you are, the less room you make for faith.” - Craig Barnes



- Sometimes people think having faith means having all the answers - all the right responses, all your theological ducks in a row.
- What has held you back from talking about your relationship with God?
- What do you need to let go of? To leave behind?
- How can you share your own experience?

Letting Go

- When we let go, we can witness like the woman at the well, telling our own story.
- When we let go, we can begin to imagine what God has in mind for us.
- Trusting in a future that God is fashioning, we are liberated.
- When we hold onto images of perfect faith, we forget that God doesn't see perfect - God sees good.
- When we let go of the "shoulds" and "supposed tos," what opens up?

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Help us to let go - of all the things. You know all the things because you see us. You know all the things because you know about us. YOU know everything we have ever done to try to be someone we are not. Those things that serve expectations and judgments. Those things that placate so as to please others, all the while forgetting that you seek us out in our Sychars. Thank you, Jesus, for going out of your way, literally, to find us. Amen.
