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# Belonging: 5 Keys to Unlock Your Potential as a Disciple

Week 5: Witness

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# Overview

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

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

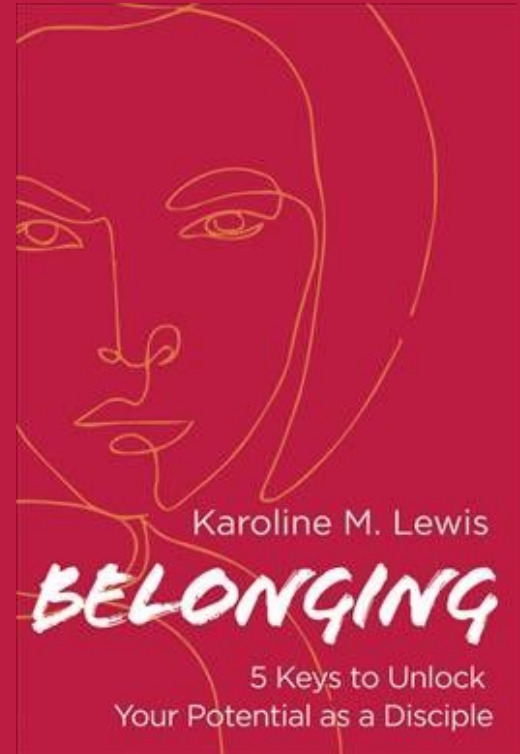
Week 2: John 4: 7-15 - Wonder

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: Letting Go

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# 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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# Letting Go

- When we let go, we can witness like the woman at the well, telling our own story.
  - Did anyone start working on their story?
  - What did that feel like?
  - How did that go?

## Focus Verses: John 4:31-42

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' 32 But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' 33 So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' 34 Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. 35 Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. 36 The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

## Focus Verses: John 4:31-42

39 Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

# Sowing & Harvest: John 4:34

*Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me & to complete his work."*

- Verses 31-38 are frequently skipped
- Like Nicodemus & the woman at the well, the disciples & us misunderstand Jesus
- Jesus brought them through Samaria for a reason - to understand "God so loved the world"
- Jesus spells out symbols, physical and real, but stand for something else
  - Nicodemus - being born again/anew/from above
  - Woman at the well - water
  - Disciples - food
- For John, these symbols direct us toward a truth that Jesus is revealing about himself
- Not only symbolic, why?



# Sowing & Harvest: John 4:34

*Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me & to complete his work."*

- Jesus is the Word made flesh; we have to hold both his full divinity & his full humanity
- Jesus' body points to God, but that doesn't mean his body/humanity isn't important
- John is always drawing our attention from Jesus' divinity to humanity, & his humanity to his divinity
  - Throughout is crucifixion reminded of his humanity - "I am thirsty"
  - Death of Lazarus - "Jesus wept"
- Here we are not talking about literal food but a different understanding of nourishment
- In Jesus' presence & ministry as the Word made flesh, Jesus makes God known

# Sowing & Harvest: John 4:34

*Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me & to complete his work."*

- Jesus comes not for us to understand God, but for us to get to know God, to be in relationship with God, through Jesus, God is now fully known and experienced
- "Work" in John refers to bringing people to believe in God, Jesus' work is to bring God's love to the WHOLE world, sheep into the flock, and here he is calling the disciples to do the same
- Farming imagery, Field = the world/the Samaritans, are ready for harvesting, inviting the whole world into relationship with God.
- Jesus brings his disciples to Samaria to show them, not tell them, what their work needs to be
- Jesus' time is limited, now it's the disciples' turn so that John 3:16 actually comes true

# Abiding: John 4:40

*“he stayed there for two days”*

- Greek verb, μένω, *menō*, used over 40 times in John, “to stay”, “to remain”, “to dwell”, “to continue”
- To abide with Jesus leads to relationship & denoted relationship.
- Abiding is John’s preferred word to describe what a relationship with Jesus & God feels like.
  - Calling of disciples “where are you staying/abiding”, “come & see”, “they went & saw where he was staying, & they remained” (John 1:38-38)
  - “My Father’s house has room to spare. If that weren’t the case, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:1-2) “abiding places”, Mansions
  - “Remain [abide] in me, & I will remain [abide] in you. A branch can’t produce fruit by itself, but must remain [abide] in the vine. I am the vine; you are the branches” (John 15:4-5)
    - The vine cannot reach its full potential without the branches. The branched can’t survive without the vine.

# Abiding: John 4:40

*“he stayed there for two days”*

- Samaritans, many more believed because of abiding with Jesus
- Not a slight against the woman at the well or her testimony
- It is necessary to have your own encounter with Jesus, your own “born again” moment, no secondhand relationship



# Believing & Relationship: John 4:41

*And many more believed because of his word.*

- In John, “believing” is always a verb, never a noun
- It's a state of being in relationship & not about set of faith statements
- Belief in John is to respond to Jesus’ invitation, to come & see, & to trust in this relationship that leads to abundant life, both here & now, & in our resurrected life.
- “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God” John 1:12-13
  - Parental image of God in which we are God children. God provides us with everything a child needs to survive & thrive
  - Living Water - John 4
  - Bread of life - John 6
  - Good Shepherd - John 10

# Believing & Relationship: John 4:41

*And many more believed because of his word.*

- John 1:18: “at the Father’s side” - “at the bosom/breast of the Father”
- The only other occurrence of the breast/bosom in John is when the Beloved Disciple in chapter 13
  - “One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him” (NRSV)
  - “One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved dearly, was reclining against him, his head on his shoulder.” (The Message)
  - “Reclining at the table was one of his disciples, on the bosom of Jesus, the one whom Jesus loved.” (Rev. Lewis)
- Who is the “Beloved Disciple” - John the Baptist, John the author, Lazarus ...

**it's  
US** 

- Are we meant to imagine ourselves lying on the bosom of Jesus, just as Jesus rests on the bosom of God
- This takes place during the last supper Jesus talks both Judas' betrayal & Peter's denial of him
- Jesus will be abandoned, & is comforted by this relationship with the Beloved Disciple
- Jesus needs us as much as we need Jesus because that is what relations is all about
- Beloved Disciple at foot of cross with Jesus' mother



- How does that feel to think of yourself as the Beloved Disciple?
- Is that an image you are comfortable with? Why or why not?
- How might seeing others as the Beloved Disciple change the way we treat/interact/respond to people? Particular people with whom we disagree?
- “\_\_\_\_\_ of the disciples, the one Jesus loved dearly, was reclining against him, her/his/their head on his shoulder.” (The Message)



# Savior of the World: John 4:42

*we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.*

- Only time in John, savior is used, not from disciples, or people we know, but from Samaritans.
  - How do you think the Jewish readers of John hear this?
- What does it mean for the Jesus to be savior of the world when he hasn't died & been resurrected?
- For John, salvation isn't from Jesus' death on the cross but is experienced in Jesus' life & ministry
- Salvation, to be saved. Is to have a relationship with Jesus, & with God
- The cross in John's understanding is the inevitable outcome of what it means to be human - that is, we all die.
- Salvation is certainly our promise after the grave (John 14:2), but we would overlook the fullness of this promise, the abundant grace upon grace love of God, if we didn't recognize that salvation is also ours here and now.

# Savior of the World: John 4:42

*we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.*

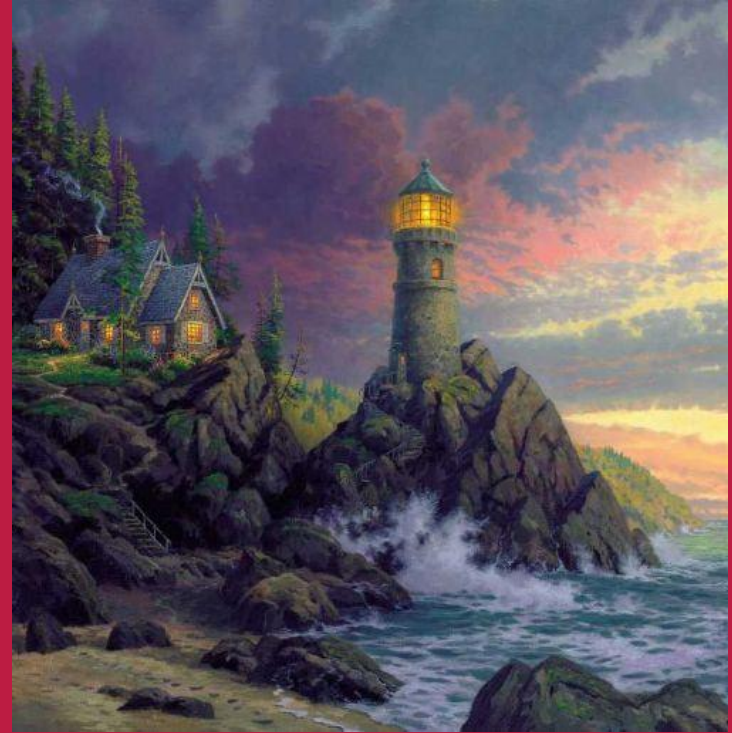
- Resurrection is our hope of life after death, it is the ascension that makes it possible for Jesus to prepare abiding places for us to be with him & God forever
- In John the ascension, not resurrection, is Jesus' culminating act of love
- In the garden, when the resurrected Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, he doesn't tell her to announce his resurrections.
  - John 20:17 - "Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."'
- In the ascension, the Gospel comes full circle



- How have you typically defined faith?
- What difference does it make to think of belief as not a noun but as a verb?

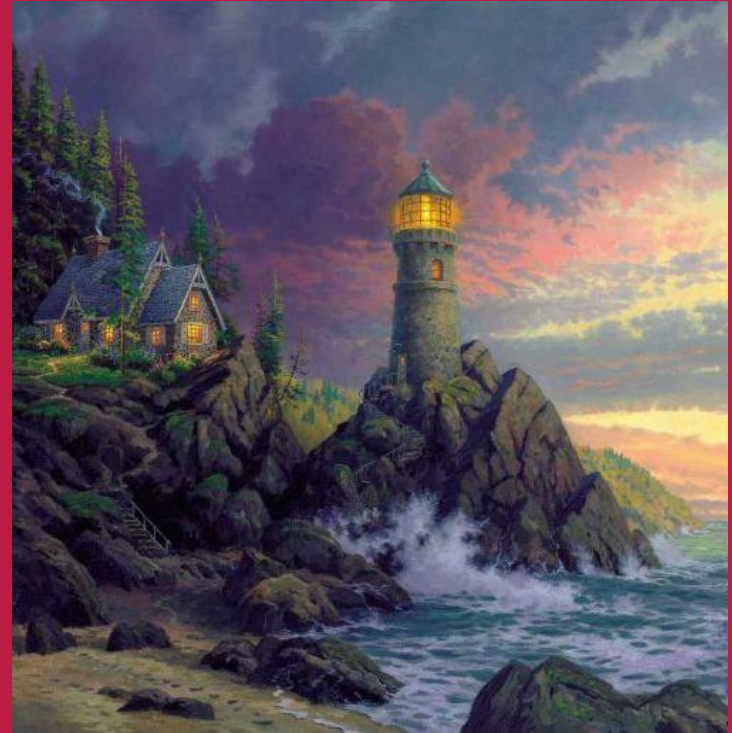
# Salvation

- How have you usually defined “salvation,” or what have you pictured salvation to be?
- Where did you learn the definition?
- How did that definition come about and what Bible passages were used to explain salvation?
- Have you ever thought about salvation as something that makes a difference for your life now, has it always been equated with your future life with God?

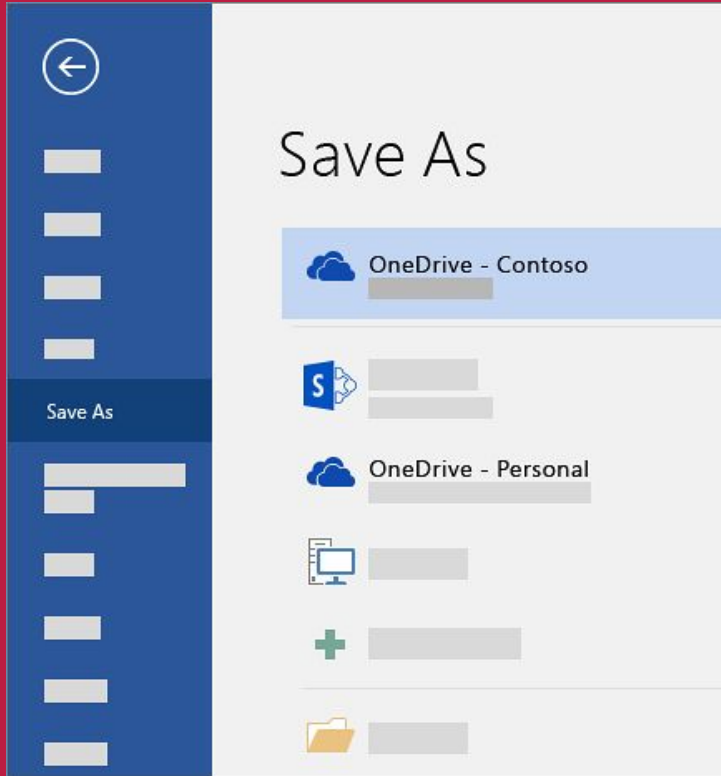


# Salvation

- How might imagining salvation as relationship & connection with God, with Jesus, here & Now, affect how you live your life?
- Would you live with less fear?
- Would you turn to God with trust more often?

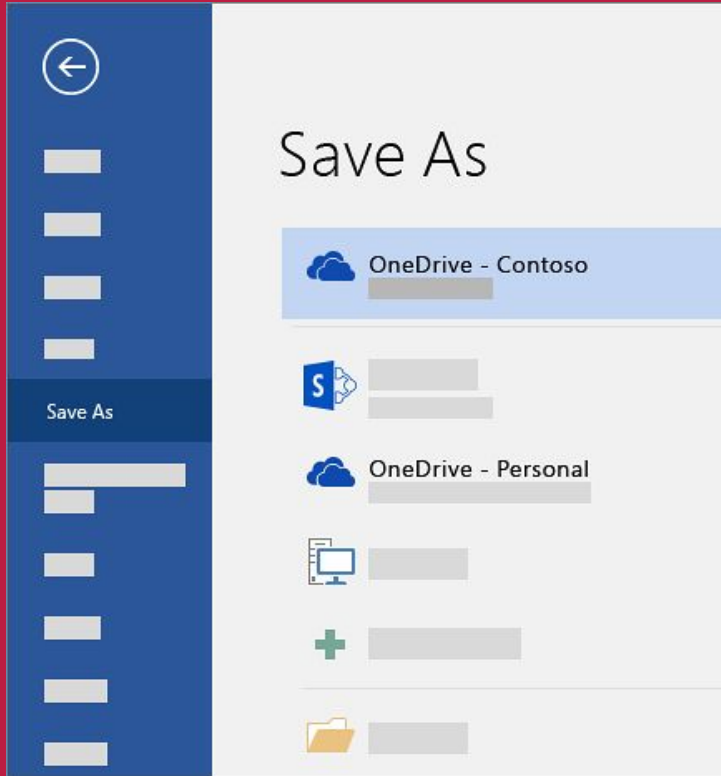


# Saved



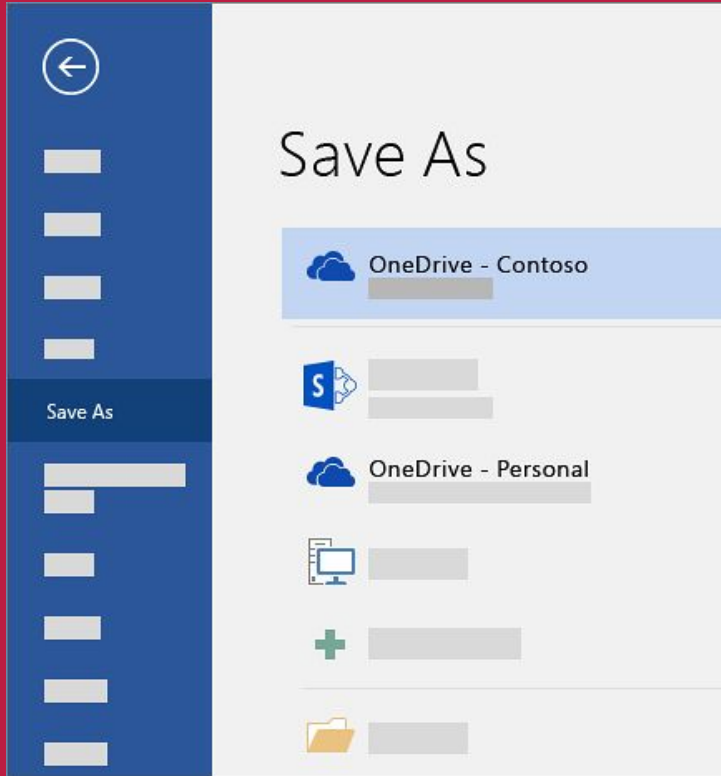
- The woman at the well was “saved” that day - saved from shame & blame
- She didn’t keep this salvation to herself
- Salvation has to be shared - not so that another soul is won for heaven, but so that God’s love becomes how the world works.
- Woman at the well, salvation means relationship with Jesus, and then reconnecting with her community.

# Saved



- What will you do with salvation that's here & now just as life for which you wait or anticipate?
- Will you go to Sychar? Will you ask for that water? Will you tell your truth? Will you leave behind your water jar? Will you say, "come & see"?
- How can God love the world without our witness?

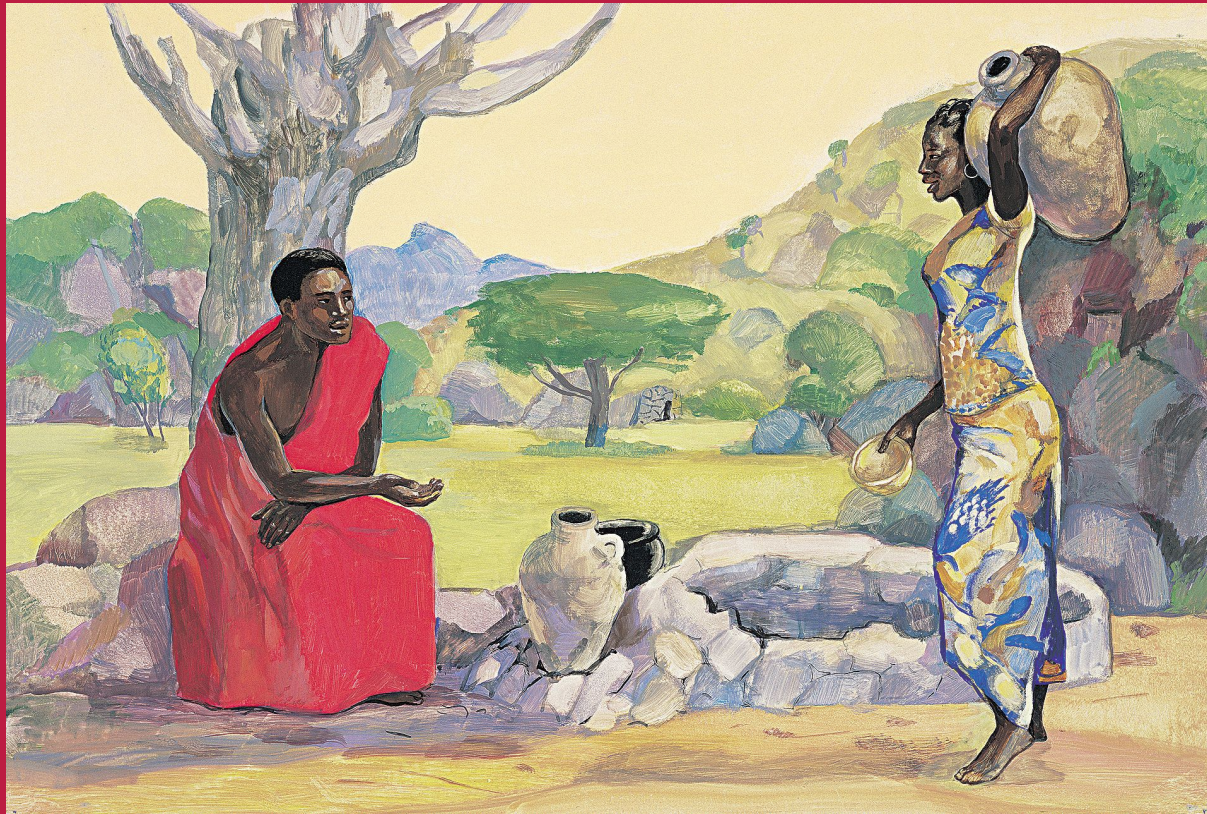
# Saved



“God so loved the world” is just about the best definition of salvation ever - to abide in God’s love, a love that brings you into relationship with the entire world.”



# Witnessing



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# Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Help us to be witnesses you need for the sake of the world you love. When you sense our uncertainties, our distrust and disbelief, pull us back to your loving breast to rest and be renewed, where we might belong once again. Amen.

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