



EYEWITNESS

THE VISUAL BIBLE EXPERIENCE

DISCUSSION GUIDE

BY MIKAL KEEFER

INTRODUCTION

The people you meet in *Eyewitness* aren't make-believe. Like you, they breathed and bled, had good days and bad.

And their everyday lives were upended by encounters with God.

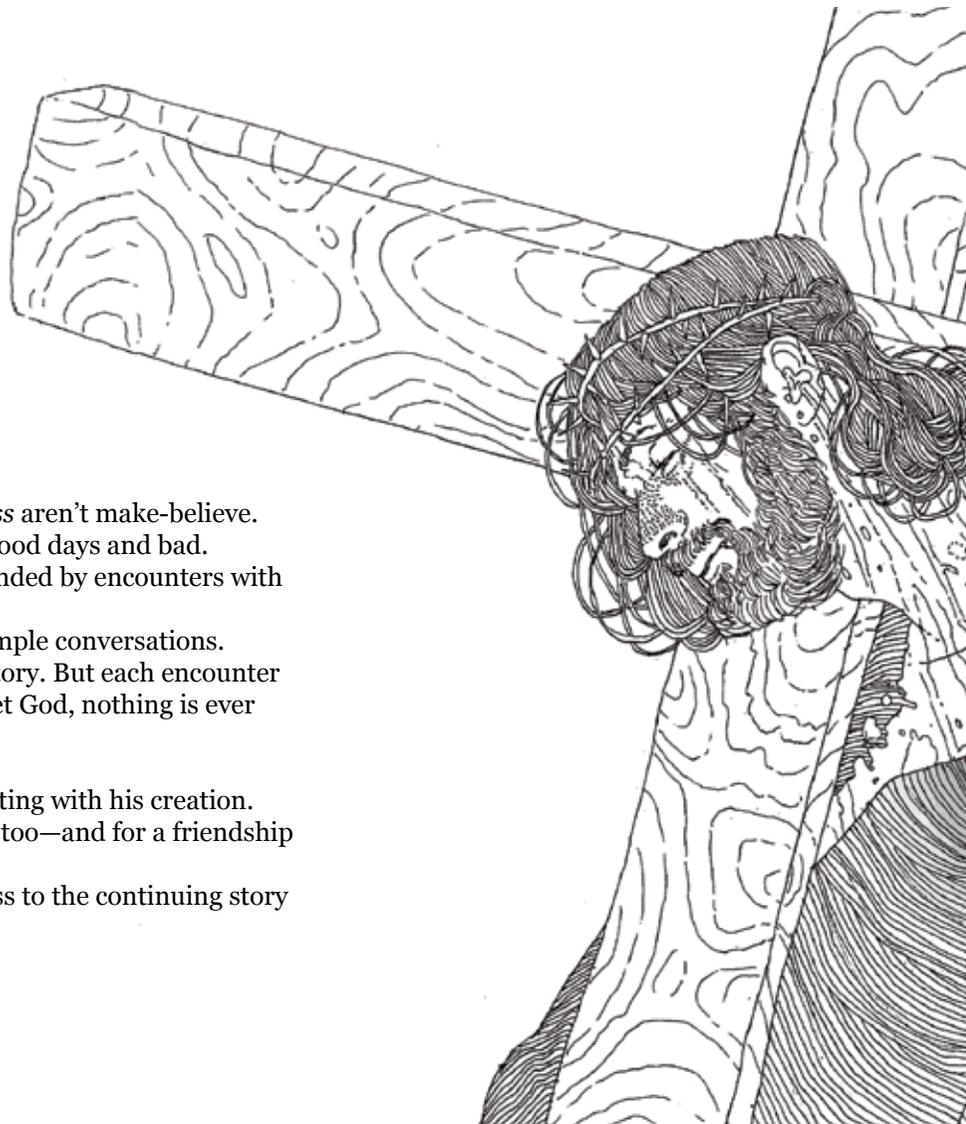
Some of those encounters were simple conversations. Others rattled the earth and shifted history. But each encounter has this in common: For those who meet God, nothing is ever again the same.

True then...and true today.

You see, God isn't finished connecting with his creation. He's hungry for an encounter with you, too—and for a friendship that stretches out through eternity.

Because you, too, are an eyewitness to the continuing story of God's love.

Especially his love for you.



HOW TO USE THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

These questions will help your group mine deep meaning from the powerful stories you see and read in *Eyewitness*. You'll explore how people felt as their stories unfolded, and how their stories are like your own.

As conversation flows, look for insights to surface as others share their own lives. Don't rush it—you're seeing God at work as people connect in fresh ways, as friendships form and deepen.

You're an eyewitness to something wonderful: God changing lives.



Adam: A First for Everything

Genesis 1-2

- An awestruck Adam was sorting out his relationship with God, with creation, with Eve. How do you think he felt throughout this process? Why?
- Where do you see yourself in Adam's story?
- Art, much like nature, can point us to various attributes of God. What does the art in Adam's story say to you about the nature of God?
- What might God be telling you through your encounter with the creation story?

“THE CREATOR
WANTED COMPANY.
A COMPANION THAT
MIRRORED HIS OWN
IMAGE. AND SO GOD
MADE ME...”



Eve: The Taste of Regret

Genesis 3

- Eve's story is one of regret—and she's not alone. What's a story of regret in your life?
- Eve's story is also one of falling prey to deception. When have you fallen prey to a lie?
- The illustrations in Eve's story begin with beauty and comfort, and end with ruin and despair. What images spring to mind when you think about both beautiful and ruinous moments in your life?
- What does this encounter with Eve tell you about God's character?

“HAVE YOU EVER
REGRETTED
SOMETHING SO
MUCH YOU'D GIVE
ANYTHING—
ANYTHING—TO
TAKE IT BACK?”



Noah: Tears and Rain

Genesis 6-9

- So many emotions swirl through the story of Noah—disbelief, sorrow, survivor guilt, relief, horror—which speaks most loudly to you?
- What do you discover about God in this story?
- Where do you see yourself in Noah’s story?
- The rainbow illustration in this story is likely different than any other art you’ve seen depicting Noah’s rainbow. It’s unexpected. How have you encountered God in an unexpected or surprising way?

“AND I BELIEVE
GOD WILL FIND
A WAY, SOMEDAY,
SOMEHOW, TO
PROVE TO PEOPLE
JUST HOW MUCH HE
LOVES THEM.”



Sarah: Pride and Joy

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-6

- How do you think Sarah felt throughout this time in her life?
- In God's interaction with Sarah, what attributes of God shine through?
- Where—if anywhere—do you see your story in Sarah's story?
- Your first glimpse of Sarah shows her holding an empty jar, symbolizing her empty womb. Then God fills her arms with a child, filling her heart with joy. What might be symbols in your life of emptiness and fulfillment?
- Tell about a time God kept a promise to you—or hasn't that happened?

"I MAY BE OLD, BUT I'LL NEVER BE TOO OLD FOR GOD'S LOVE TO PUT A SMILE ON MY FACE."



Abraham: Seeing in the Dark

Genesis 15, 22

- It was when Abraham faced the harshest challenges that he found hope. What's a time you found hope during dark days?
- What insight does Abraham's encounter with God give you about God? How do you feel about that insight?
- We watch Isaac mature in the art of Abraham's story. How has art (photographs, sketches, mementos, etc.) helped you make sense of your life and deal with difficult times?
- What message might God have for you in Abraham's story?

"IT'S THE DARKEST NIGHTS YOU SEE THE MOST STARS."



Joseph: In My Wildest Dreams

Genesis 37-47

- Joseph's resilience was fueled by an unshakable trust in God. What fuels your resilience when you encounter setbacks and disappointments?
- What's revealed about God in Joseph's story? How does that line up with your experience with God?
- Where do you see yourself in Joseph's story?
- The dreamlike art might make Joseph's story feel like a distant fantasy. Which parts of Joseph's account—whether visuals or words—connect his story with your real, everyday life?

“THIS HAS BEEN GOD’S PLAN ALL ALONG...WHAT YOU MEANT FOR EVIL, GOD USED FOR SOMETHING TRULY WONDERFUL.”



Moses: I Burn for You

Exodus 1-14

- Moses struggles with seeing himself as God sees him. Describe how you think God sees you. In what ways is seeing yourself as God sees you a struggle?
- What do Moses' encounters with God tell you about God?
- What part of Moses' story reminds you of your own life?
- Why do you think this story was titled "I Burn for You"?
- Moses' story is a journey of self-discovery and identity. Which illustration of Moses do you most identify with, and why?

"I'M NOT WHO YOU
THINK I AM...I'M
WHO GOD THINKS
I AM."



God's 10 Instructions for the Ultimate Life

Exodus 20

- Which of these “10 Commandments” feels most compelling to you today? Why?
- What words would you use to describe how Moses is depicted in this illustration? In what ways does that description apply to your life?



Rahab: Unbreakable

Joshua 2

- Rahab chose to risk lowering her walls—what would have to happen in your life for you to lower the walls you’ve raised to protect yourself?
- Where in your life do you feel yourself building the strongest walls?
- Where do you see God peeking through in Rahab’s story?
- This artist uses clouds, flowers, and birds as symbols of Rahab’s freedom. What images would you choose to symbolize what freedom looks like in your life?

“I LIKE WALLS...
WALLS HELP
ME GUARD MY
SECRETS.”



Ruth and Naomi: This Is Us

Ruth 1-4

- What, if anything, do you find inspirational about Ruth and Naomi's story?
- In what ways—if any—does God figure in this story?
- What's a conversation you've had with someone that showed his or her loyalty to you?
- In the next image, describe the look you see on each character's face. Which face can you relate to most in your life right now?
- If there's a message God has for you in this story, what do you think it is?

"I WAS LOYAL.
I LOVED YOU!
YOU NEEDED ME!"



David: Big Shot

1 Samuel 17:1-51

- David's confidence is legendary. How does your level of confidence compare—and why?
- Where in this story do you see God's fingerprints? What does that tell you about God?
- In what ways does David's story remind you of your own story?
- Which illustration in this story strikes you most powerfully? Why?

“YOU'RE EVEN
BRAVER THAN I
THOUGHT.”



Psalm 23

- Which portion of this psalm is most meaningful to you right now in life?
- This art portrays a life held in God's hands. In what ways does this illustration reflect your experience with God? In what ways does it differ?



Solomon: A Time for Everything

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 13

- Reading this passage, what season of your life would you say you're in?
- This artist chose to create a contemporary-looking scene to depict this passage. In what ways do you think Solomon's wisdom applies to today's world?



Isaiah: Judgment and Hope

Isaiah 1-4, 52-53

- Isaiah found hope even in harsh news. Where do you find hope in the news that reaches you about the world today?
- Given what Isaiah says, how would you describe God? How do you feel about God in light of this message?
- Isaiah describes the coming Messiah. What words would you use to describe Jesus?
- Isaiah's words carried both judgment and hope for the people of Israel. Where do you see hope and judgment in this art—and which calls to you most loudly?

“BUT GOD IS NOT
GIVING UP ON YOU.”



Esther: For Such a Queen as I

Esther 1-9

- Though Esther was scared, she chose courage. How might you choose courage somewhere in your life?
- Where—if anywhere—do you see God’s hand in this story?
- What’s a fear you’re feeling right now?
- What might the artist be saying by drawing some characters and situations different sizes? If there’s a message there, what does it mean to you?

“I KNEW WHAT I
HAD TO DO.”



Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: Hearts on Fire

Daniel 3

- Throughout their adventure, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were rock-solid in their faith. Would you describe your faith foundation as rock-solid, shifting sand, or quicksand? Why?
- What do you discover about the character of God in this story?
- When have you felt God was with you—literally?
- The artist portrays Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as calm while in the furnace. Were someone sketching you when you're under fire, how would you look?
- If there's a message for you in this story, what do you think it might be?

“AND GOD WAS
WITH US!
LITERALLY!”



Daniel: The Lord of the Lions

Daniel 6

- Daniel said his story was more about God than himself. What do events in Daniel's story reveal about God?
- Would you say your story is more about you—or God? Why?
- The artist seems to have made Daniel and the lion he's facing resemble one another. What do you think the artist is trying to say through that depiction?
- What might God be telling you through your encounter with Daniel's story?

“THIS IS GOD'S
STORY, NOT MINE.”



Jonah: A Sinking Feeling

Jonah 1-4

- Jonah was so frustrated he was ready to call it quits. When—if ever—have you felt that way?
- After reading this account, what words would you use to describe God?
- Where in Jonah’s story do you see yourself?
- The symbol of the big fish appears in surprising places throughout these illustrations. What do you think that symbolizes about Jonah? About God? About the story itself?

“JUST KILL ME!
IF I WERE IN THE
GRAVE AT LEAST
I’D HAVE
NOTHING TO
COMPLAIN ABOUT!”



Mary: The Birth of the King

Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2

- The angel's message to Mary shows the esteem God has for her and role of motherhood. In what ways do you see God's values reflected in our culture—and your own esteem of women and mothers?
- Mary's story is one of faithfulness, obedience, and love. Where do you see love expressed throughout this account of her life?
- Artists have created countless works of art depicting the birth of Christ over the centuries. What, if anything, stands out to you about the art in this story? Why?
- What might God be telling you through your encounter with Mary's story?

“SOMEDAY JESUS
WILL BE A GREAT
AND MIGHTY
RULER, BUT UNTIL
THEN HE'S MY
CUDDLER IN CHIEF.”

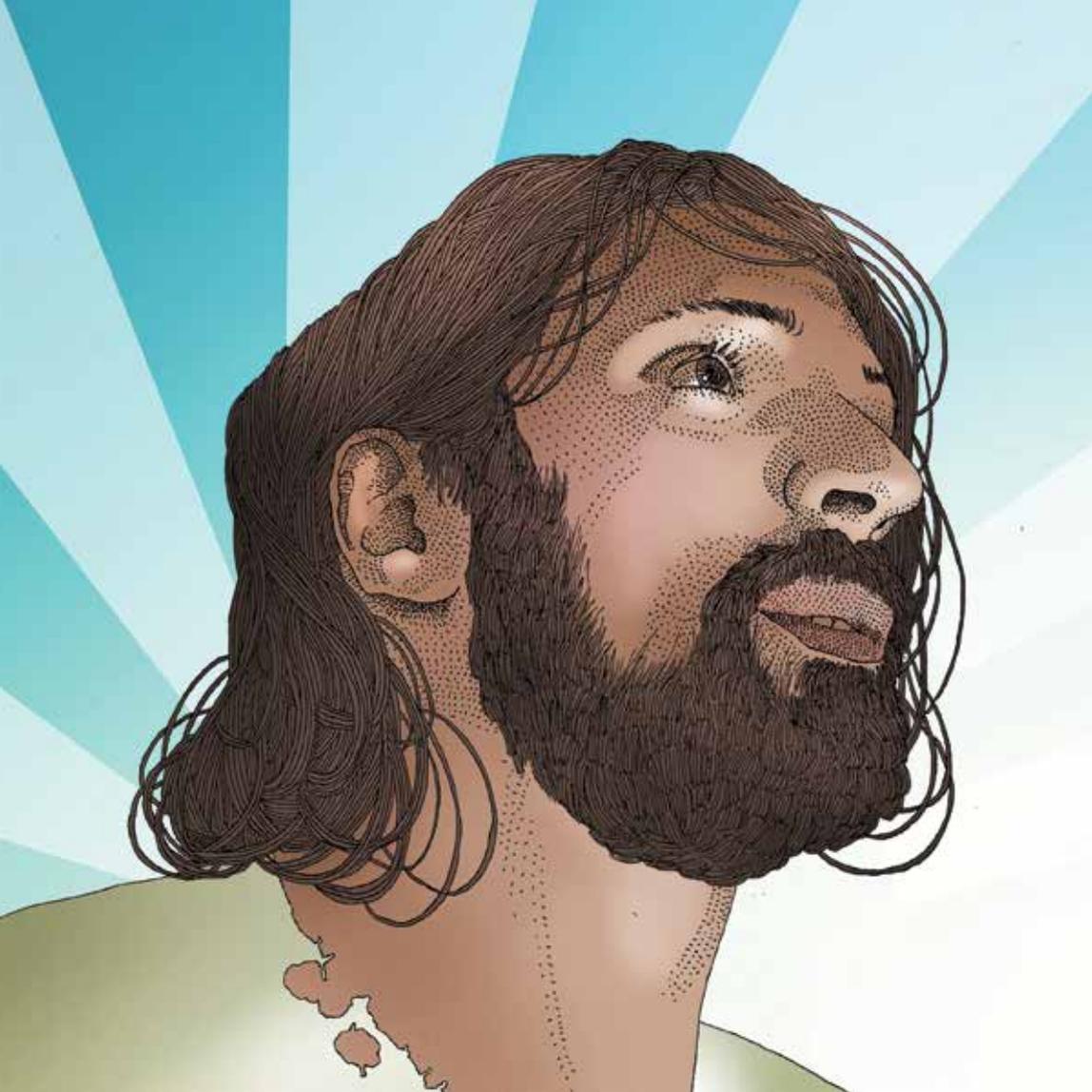


Satan: Right Here, Right Now

Matthew 4:1-11

- What do you think prompted Satan to challenge Jesus? Where do you see arrogance at work in Satan's encounters with Jesus?
- What do Satan's responses to Jesus tell you about Satan?
- What do Jesus' responses to Satan tell you about Jesus?
- What do these illustrations say about the nature of Satan? How do they contrast with the portrayal of Jesus?
- If there's a message for you in this story, what do you think it might be?

“YOU HUMANS
MAKE IT SO EASY.
IT DOESN'T TAKE
MUCH TO WIN YOU
OVER...”



Jesus Teaches on the Mountainside

“DO YOU WANT TO
BE TRULY HAPPY?”

Matthew 5-7

- Which of Jesus’ pathways to happiness do you find most challenging? Why?

People will see God at work because of the compassionate things you do.

- In what ways would you say Jesus’ remark about adhering to his higher standards is true—or untrue—about you?

When you talk to God, speak from the heart.

- Were you to say something from the heart to God now, what would it be?

God loves giving good things to his children. So ask him!

- There’s generosity in God’s Kingdom. What good thing would you like God to bring into your life?
- The artist’s drawings of hands are intended to illustrate different ways people pray. Which, if any, are most like how you reach out to God?
- How would you sum up Jesus’ teachings? And in what ways do they relate to your life today?



Nicodemus: Life #2

John 3:1-21

- How did you come to meet Jesus for yourself? Or hasn't that happened?
- In what ways are you still curious about Jesus?
- Reading this story, what do you discover about Jesus?
- Some find this illustration of Jesus jarring because he's pictured without a beard—though no one knows if he wore one. To what extent do you think you've made Jesus fit how you imagine him to be?

"I WAS CURIOUS.
I HAD TO MEET HIM
FOR MYSELF..."



The Woman at the Well: Every Little Piece of Me

John 4:1-42

- At first this woman kept Jesus at a safe distance—and for good reason. In what ways do you keep Jesus at a distance? Why?
- This woman's view of Jesus shifted from suspicion to amazement. What words would you use to describe how you view Jesus lately?
- Where do you see yourself in this woman's story?
- This art portrays the Samaritan woman as being at one with the water. What do you think inspired the artist to do this? How is that true or untrue of Jesus' living water in your life?

“‘I KNOW WHO YOU ARE,’ HE TOLD ME. ‘AND IF YOU KNEW WHO I WAS YOU’D BE ASKING ME FOR A DRINK.’”



The Accused Woman: Hearts of Stone

John 8:1-11

- In what ways do you identify with the woman in this story?
- In the end, this woman found herself set free. In what ways do you yearn for freedom? What's shackling you?
- Sum up what you discover about Jesus in this encounter. What do you see?
- Look again at all the illustrations in this story as you think about a time you've been caught doing something wrong. Which illustration best depicts your emotions when in a situation like that?
- What might God be telling you through your encounter with this woman's story?

"I LOOKED AROUND,
SHOCKED TO
DISCOVER MY
EXECUTIONERS
HAD GONE..."



A Jewish Lawyer: The Compassionate Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

- Most Jews in Jesus' audience didn't care for Samaritans. Who are people that, for some reason, you find difficult to love? What planted that dislike in you?
- What does this story reveal about what it means to be a neighbor?
- There's resolve on the Samaritan's face—a determination to help the injured man no matter what. When have you worn that same expression?
- What might God be telling you through this encounter with the lawyer's story?

“A SAMARITAN?
I'M NOT A RACIST,
BUT I CAN HARDLY
STAND THOSE
PEOPLE.”

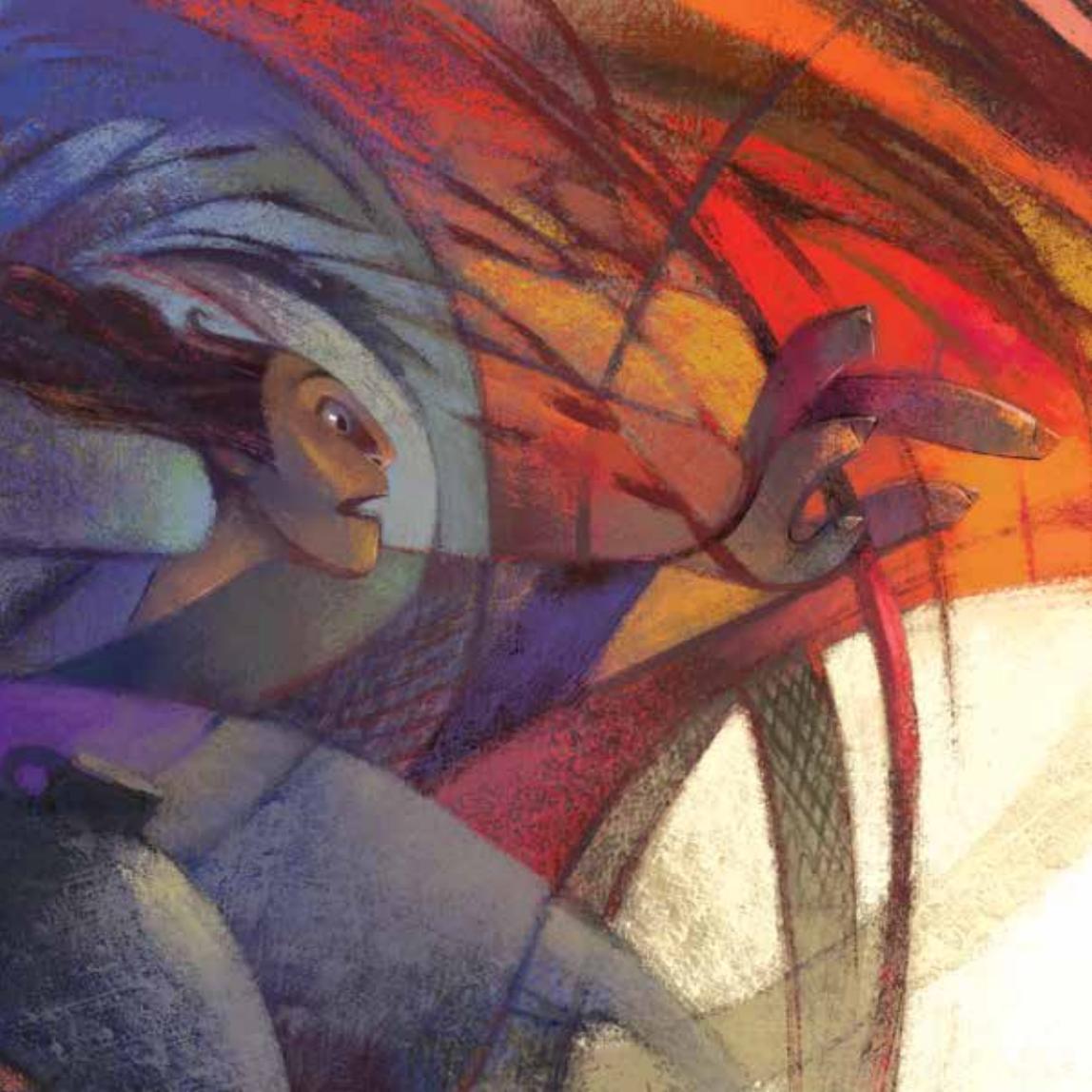


Martha: The One Thing

Luke 10:38-42

- Martha felt unappreciated as she prepared a meal for her guests. When is a time you felt unappreciated? How did you handle the situation?
- Martha discovered one thing mattered more than anything else. How would you describe that one thing?
- What differences do you see in Martha's expressions in these two illustrations? What do you think is going through Martha's mind in the second illustration?
- What might God be telling you through your encounter with Martha's story?

"NO ONE
WORKS HARDER
THAN I DO."



The Wayward Son: The Long Road Home

Luke 15:11-32

- Who reminds you most of yourself in this story—the father, older brother, or wayward son? Why do you answer as you do?
- The older brother struggled to forgive. Where have you found yourself struggling to forgive?
- The wayward son seemed to struggle with forgiving himself. Where has that been a challenge for you?
- The father extended pure, no-holding-back forgiveness to his wayward son. When has someone offered that to you—and how did it feel?
- Much like these abstract illustrations, our real-life feelings of betrayal, forgiveness, and reconciliation can often be difficult to express and interpret. In what ways do you try to communicate when you struggle to find the right words?

“I HAD ONLY
TWO CHOICES:
GO HOME...OR DIE.”

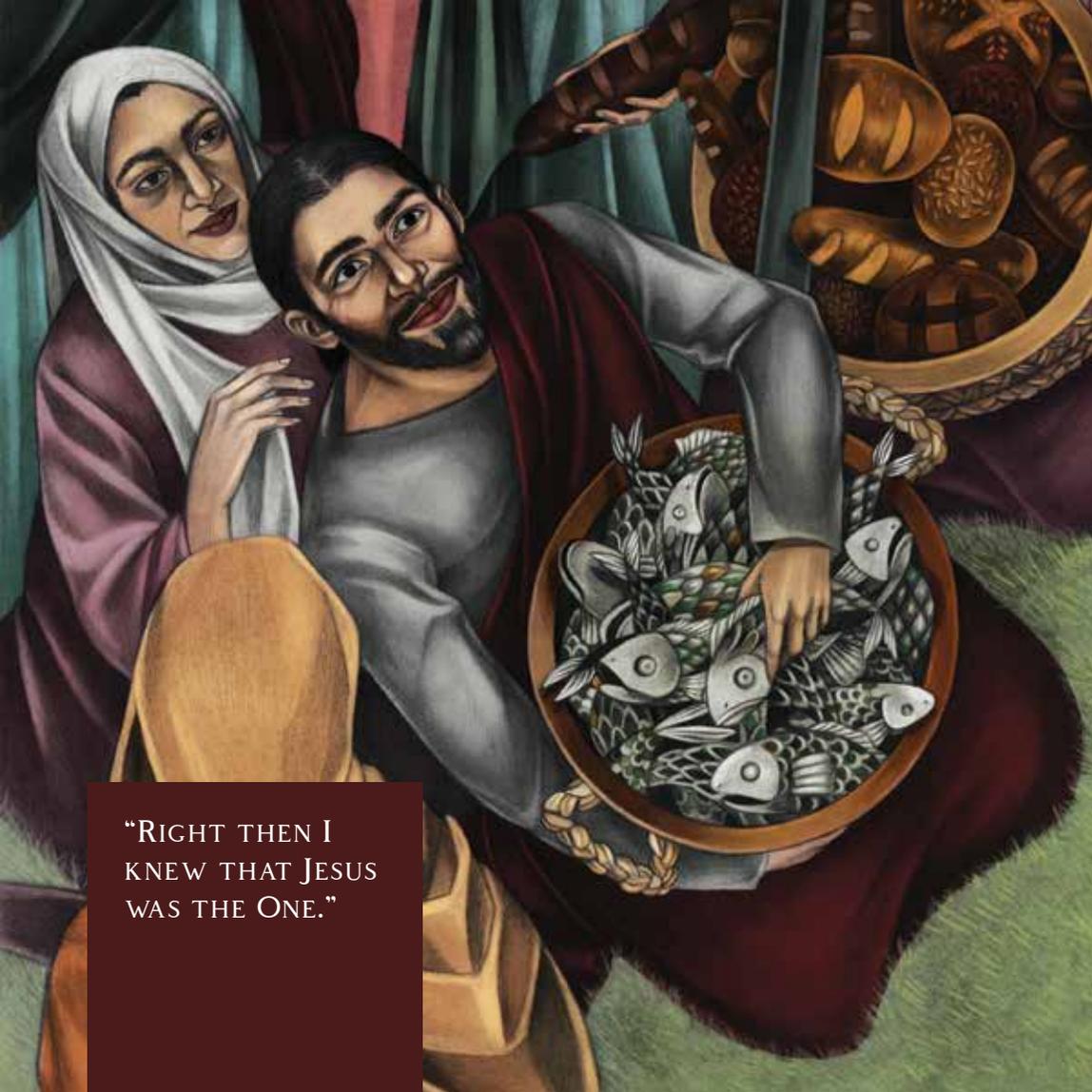


Peter: Rock the Walk

Matthew 4:18-25; 14:22-23; 16:13-19; 26:31-35; 69-75; John 6:16-21, 60-69

- Where do you see Peter's passion for Jesus shine through in his friendship with Jesus? When it falters, why do you think it falters?
- Describe a time you felt your passion for Jesus fading. What—if anything—did you do when that happened?
- This artist found a unique way to interpret Peter as the “rock” of the church. What meanings do you take away from this illustration?
- What might God be telling you through this encounter with Peter's story?

“JESUS' LOVE
RISES ABOVE AND
BEYOND EVEN
YOUR HIGHEST
EXPECTATIONS.
IT FLOATS WHILE
EVERYTHING ELSE
SINKS.”



“RIGHT THEN I
KNEW THAT JESUS
WAS THE ONE.”

Jesus' Disciples: That You May Know

Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 5:17-26; John 2:1-11; 11:1-44; 21:15-17

- Water into wine...a storm silenced...five thousand fed...miraculous healings...Lazarus raised from the dead. Jesus' miracles were astonishing. When have you experienced Jesus' power in your life?
- If you believe Jesus is still doing miracles in the world, where do you see them?
- Andrew saw something in Jesus that took his breath away. What about Jesus astounds you?
- Matthew thought he knew Jesus and then discovered there was even more to his friend. What's something you've discovered about Jesus lately?
- Jesus gave Nathanael an impossible task. What's something Jesus is asking of you that you can't do without his help?
- Philip marveled at Jesus' ability to heal and forgive. What's something in your world you'd love for Jesus to heal or forgive?
- James had just cause to no longer fear death once he met and followed Jesus. If you're a Jesus-follower, in what ways does that change how you feel about dying? Or doesn't it make much difference?
- Five stories of Jesus' miracles—which do you find yourself most drawn to? Why? What do you think that says about you...and Jesus?



Jesus is the Vine

John 15:1-14

- In what ways does being attached to Jesus—the “vine”—produce fruit in your life?
- How does this illustration express the heart of what Jesus is saying?

“WHEN YOU STAY
CONNECTED TO OUR
LOVE, GOD’S LOVE
FLOWS THROUGH
YOU.”

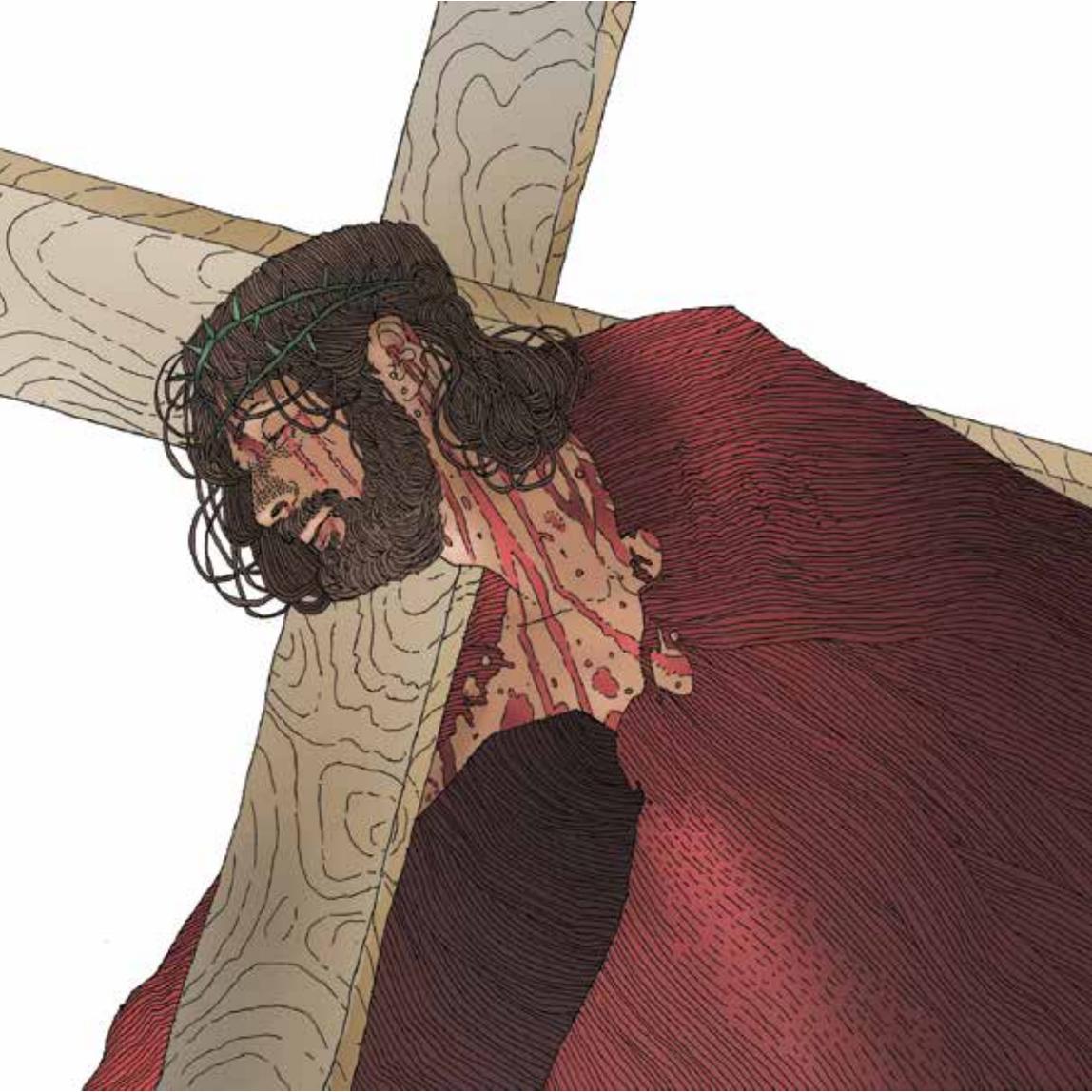


John: The Last Supper

Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-39; John 13-17

- Jesus knew this was his last Passover with his disciples, so he drove home some truths to sustain them. What were the truths—and how do they sustain you in difficult times?
- The disciples felt confused...lost...sad. When have those words described you? In what ways did knowing Jesus make a difference—or not?
- There have been so many depictions of The Last Supper. What do you find meaningful in this artist's interpretation of that event?
- What might God be telling you through this description of this last supper before Jesus' death on the cross?

“HE HAD ONE THING LEFT TO OFFER: HIS VERY LIFE.”



Jesus: Shaking Things Up

*Matthew 26-28; Mark 15-16; Luke 23-24;
John 18:20*

- This is a story of arrest, torture, death. In what ways do you see it also being a story of love?
- Even in Jesus' final minutes, he forgives. How has Jesus' forgiveness touched you? How do you feel about that forgiveness?
- Where do you see yourself in Jesus' story?
- Seeing Jesus' bloody body disturbs many people. But what are your feelings when you look at the last illustration in this story—that of the empty tomb?

“I CONQUERED
DEATH SO YOU
COULD KNOW,
WITHOUT A DOUBT,
THAT GOD’S LOVE
IS THE STRONGEST
FORCE IN THE
UNIVERSE.”



Thomas: Of Scars and Skeptics

John 20:24-29

- What doubts do you have about Jesus or what you've been told about him? What, if anything, have you done with those doubts?
- What do you discover about the character of Jesus in this encounter?
- The artist portrays Jesus as willing to embrace our doubts. In what ways have you found that to be true—or not?
- How does this art reflect the heart of Thomas' story?

“SO WHEN THE OTHER DISCIPLES TOLD ME JESUS WAS ALIVE, I HAD MY DOUBTS.”



James: Sky Witness

Acts 1:1-11

- James was impressed with Jesus' boldness. What impresses you about Jesus?
- Which face and eyes in these illustrations best shows how you're feeling about Jesus right now?
- James felt the impact of Jesus leaving him. When—if ever—have you felt a distance between you and Jesus?
- James yearns for Jesus' return. How do you feel about Jesus coming back—and why do you feel as you do?

“EVERYTHING
JESUS DID WAS
FEARLESS,
ESPECIALLY THE
WAY HE LOVED
PEOPLE—EVEN
PEOPLE WHO
REJECTED HIM.”



Peter: All Fired Up

Acts 2

- Peter's life was interrupted by fire and passion. When have you felt yourself filled with either? What lit you up or swept you away?
- Peter and the other disciples faced skepticism. Where does skepticism bump up against what you believe about God? About what you think God may be doing in the world?
- God's Spirit seems to almost invade Peter's life. In what ways has that been part of your experience—or not?
- You see something different when you look at this art close up or from a distance. How do you think your view of God changes depending on how close you are to him...or how far away you feel? What's your vantage point?
- What might God be telling you through your encounter with Peter's story?

“JESUS SAID IT
AGAIN AND AGAIN:
LOVE GOD AND
LOVE ONE
ANOTHER.”



Paul: A New Man

Acts 7-9, 13-18, 21-28

- This is a story about transformation from hate to humility. When have you had a “from/to” experience with Jesus?
- What do you discover about Jesus in this story?
- Which illustration of Paul in this story best represents the current state of your spiritual journey?

“I WAS ON MY WAY TO THE CITY OF DAMASCUS...WHEN I REALIZED JUST HOW MUCH GOD CAN CHANGE YOU.”



Love Is Everything

1 Corinthians 13:1-7, 13

- God is love—which means Paul’s description of love describes God. How does it feel to be loved by God in this way?
- Where have you experienced this sort of love in your human relationships—or hasn’t that happened?
- This artist chose to use a “motherly” love to illustrate the concept of love. What would you have drawn if you’d been asked to illustrate this chapter?

“THREE THINGS
THAT WILL LAST
FOREVER: FAITH,
HOPE, AND LOVE.”



John: All Things New

Revelation 21-22

- John marveled at God’s indescribable creation. What about God—or his works—prompts you to marvel?
- What does John’s encounter with heaven tell you about God?
- Heaven can be a challenge to imagine. What in this artist’s portrayal of heaven surprises you? How does this illustrator’s artistic interpretation of heaven compare to what you imagine?
- How do you feel about going to heaven? What concerns do you have—if any—about an eternity in heaven?

“HOW DO YOU
DESCRIBE THE
INDESCRIBABLE?”