

Reference Note for Forgotten Followers from Broken to Bold

Forgotten Followers from Broken to Bold reimagines the Gospel stories through the eyes of women, offering a fresh view of familiar stories. Putting you in the shoes of the woman disciples engages your senses and emotions, allowing you to visualize, reflect, pray and contemplate about the meaning of the Gospel stories.

This Reference Note contains excerpts from the upcoming *Interactive Study Guide: What to Do When You Feel Forgotten*. Each of the ten sessions provides biblical reference by chapter, a blessing, questions for reflection and prompts for your prayer and contemplation. You may compare the novel with the biblical account or the way you read these stories in the past by referring to the biblical references provided. In writing the novel, I would look at several translations and commentaries for a full understanding of the meaning. Some Bible translations allow the male bias of the English language to obscure the meaning of the original language, using ‘man’ for ‘mankind’ and masculine pronouns even if the meaning is for all genders. Some translations add ‘man/men’ where it is not in the original. Some are more word-for-word while some focus on meaning and thoughts of original phrases. Sometimes I would select a specific verse and click ‘all English translations’ to see that verse from different angles. Sometimes I would read whole passages in several translations and check cross references and commentary. These tools are at www.biblegateway.com, www.biblestudytools.com, www.biblehub.com or www.bibleref.com. Each version brings something to our understanding, and we can be thankful to read whatever Bible best suits you.

SESSION 1: ENQUIRY						
Jesus prompts our enquiry into who he is						
CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical Ref.
	Introductory pages	10:3 13:55 27:55-56	3:18 6:3 15:40-41	6:15 8:2-3 11:27-28 23:49	7:5 19:25	Acts 1:13-14 2 Timothy 1:7
1	Mara: Forced to Move Galilee A.D. 27	13:53-58 10:14 4:12-13	6:1-6	4:14-30	John 1:17 John 7:5	Deuteronomy 6:16 1 Kings 17:8-15 2 Kings 1:16 2 Kings 5:1-19 Isaiah 53:1-5 Isaiah 61:1-2 Hebrews 12:15 2 Timothy 4:3 James 3:1-6

	<p>Blessing: After Jesus calls his first male disciples in Matthew 4, he delivers a famous sermon called the Beatitudes. Who does he teach in the beatitudes? (Matthew 5:1-12)</p>
	<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the blessings for? • Jesus tells the people of Nazareth he has fulfilled the Scriptures (Luke 4:16-30). In the prophecy, Jesus says he is proclaiming good news and God's favour. Who is this for? • Does Jesus call both men and women to follow him and be his disciples?
	<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To see as God sees, to open my understanding of God's word, what it says and does not say

SESSION 2: ESTABLISHED

How our experiences establish our character and beliefs

CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
2	Mara: Remembering the Day her Life Shifted Galilee, A.D. 27	3:1-17 6:3	1:1-11	3:7-23 2:1-20 2:36-49 3:1-20 5:1-11	1:29-34	Numbers 5:12-30 Leviticus 20:10-12 Deuteronomy 22:22 1 Samuel 2:1-10
3	Mara: Memories of being Alone in the Crowd Remembering Cana, A.D. 27				2:1-12	
4	Mara: Realizing Salome's Life Shifted Galilee, A.D. 27	3:7-12 4:18-25 5:17	1:14-39	4:14 5:1-11	1:35-50 21:2	Genesis 16:13 Ecclesiastes 2:19-25 Hebrews 9:22
5	Mara: First Night in Capernaum Samaritan story A.D. 27				2:13, 23 3:16-22 4:1-45	EExodus 3: 13-14 Galatians 4:19

	<p>Blessing: The Beatitudes say that those who are poor in spirit will enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3).</p>
	<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first five chapters, we meet Mara of Clopas, Maria of Nazareth, Salome of Capernaum, and Photini of the Samaritan well: How are each of them broken in spirit? Why is Mara bitter?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When have you felt poor in spirit or filled with doubts? • What characteristics do we see in Jesus’s mother, Maria? • How does Maria take an authoritative role at the wedding in Cana? • How does Maria show she had the freedom to accept or refuse God asking her to be the mother of Jesus? • How would you compare Hannah’s song (1 Samuel 2:1-9) to Maria’s song (Luke 1:46-55)? 					
	<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To open my heart to others, understand what thinking or experiences established their attitudes, and empathize with those who feel doubt or anxiety. 					
SESSION 3: ENGAGED, EDUCATED						
Jesus engages women to be patrons and supporters; Jesus educates women as students and disciples						
CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
6	Joanna: Healed but still Disheartened Capernaum, A.D. 27			9:7	4:46-54	Isaiah 9:6 1 Peter 3:7
7	Joanna: Seeing Marie Completely Healed Capernaum, A.D. 27	4:23-25	1:35-39 3:7-12			
8	Joanna: Serving with Susannah Capernaum, A.D. 28	9:2-8	1:45 2:1-12	5:17-26		Ephesians 2:8
9	Joanna: Meeting Perpetua Capernaum, AD 28	8:14-17	1:29-34	4:38-41	19:23-24	1 Corinthians 9:5
	<p>Blessing: Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness or justice will be filled (Matthew 5:6).</p>					
	<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Chapters 6-9, we meet the patrons and disciples Joanna, Susannah, and Marie of Magdala, and Peter’s wife, Perpetua. How do they each show they hunger and thirst for righteousness? • How might they be filled? • When have you, like Joanna, had to hide who you really are? • How is the novel’s portrayal of Marie of Magdala different from other descriptions you may have heard? • How would you describe the patron Susanna (Ch. 8) • Peter’s wife’s mother is mentioned in Matthew 8:14-15, Mark 1:29-31, Luke 4:38-39 and his wife travels with him according to 1 Corinthians 9:5. How would you describe Peter’s wife, Perpetua (Ch. 9)? 					
	<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek righteousness, to be students and disciples and serve God as God calls us. 					

SESSION 4: EQUALITY						
Jesus establishes women as equals and extends affirmation, acceptance, purity						
CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
10	Mara: James the Less Chosen Capernaum, A.D. 28	9:1 10:1-15	2:13-17 3:13-19 6:7-13	6:1-34 10:1-7	7:24	1 Samuel 16:7 Ruth 1:16 Acts 1:13
11	Mara: Blessings for the Poor Capernaum, A.D. 28	5:1-48 7:12		1:47-55 6:27-49 11:33-36 12:22-31	1:46-50 8:31-32	Exodus 21:10, 11, 26, 27 Leviticus 15:16 and 19:18 Deuteronomy 10:19 Deuteronomy 23:10 Deuteronomy 32:35 1 Corinthians 1: 27 1 Corinthians 7:15 Ephesians 5:33 1 Peter 3:1
12	Joanna: Affirmed as Jesus Accepts Keket Galilee, A.D. 28	6:1-34 7:1-29		7:36-50 11:1-4 12:57-59	4:24	Leviticus 15:1-33 Psalm 121:3-8 Isaiah 43:1 Romans 3:23-24 Galatians 3:23-28
13	Joanna: Veronica's Faith Makes her Clean Galilee, A.D. 28	9:14-26 11:1-19	5:21-43	7:11-28 8:40-56		Galatians 4:19 Philippians 2:12
	Blessing: The Beatitudes tell us the pure in heart will see God (Matthew 5:8). Having a pure heart may mean several things, such as having integrity, moral courage, a godly character, aiming only to do God's will, or seeing as God sees.					
	Questions for Reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence does Mara have that God loves or does not love her? • What is the impact of Mara's father and teacher blaming and shaming her? • Did God choose Mara of Clopas for anything – and if so, why can't she see it? • How does Veronica (the woman with chronic bleeding) have a pure heart? • How does Keket (the sinful woman who washes Jesus's feet) have a pure heart? • How might Mara, Veronica, or Keket see God? 					
	Prayer Prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To listen to those who have no voice, to accept and value others as God does, and encourage them to speak 					

SESSION 5: EQUIPPED						
Jesus equips women for teaching and preaching						
CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
14	Joanna and Mara: Preparing to Sow Seeds Galilee, A.D. 28	13:1-51 10:1-41	4:1-34 6:7-13	8:1-18 9:1-6 13:18-21		Exodus 21:10, 11, 26, 27 Isaiah 6:9-10 Galatians 4:19 Galatians 5:22-23 Philippians 2:12
15	Mara: Disowned, Dishonored, Disappointed Galilee, A.D. 28	9:32-34 12:1-50	3:20-35	1:28 8:19-21 11:14-28 12:9-53		Exodus 21:10-27 Exodus 31:14 Deuteronomy 22:28-29 1 Kings 17:23 Isaiah 1:11-17 Isaiah 35:5-6 Isaiah 40:3 Hosea 6:6 Romans 3:23-24
16	Joanna: Sowing Seeds Galilee, A.D. 28	6:5-15 7:13-14 19:5-9 22:36-40	10:7-12	7:18-23 10:25-28		Acts 2:38 Acts 13:1 Romans 3:23-30 Romans 10:9 1 John 1:9
	<p>Blessing: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). We can rephrase ‘the meek will inherit the earth’ as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who have nothing will receive everything money cannot buy. • Those who are lowly will be lifted up • Those who surrender their power to God may experience God’s power. 					
	<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does Jesus tell parables to both women and men? Does he explain the meaning to both men and women? • In the parable of the Sower, does Jesus indicate who is sowing the seeds of God’s word? Are the qualifications of the farmer gender-specific? Are there both male and female farmers? What are the farmer’s responsibilities vs. God’s responsibilities? Do you relate to being the farmer or the seed in this story? 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the parable where the woman puts yeast in the dough and the yeast makes the dough rise, what is the woman’s responsibility and what is God’s responsibility? • In the parable where the kingdom of heaven is like a fisher’s net thrown into the lake, gathering all kinds of fish and then sorting out the worthy ones, who is throwing the net to catch the fish, and who is sorting out which fish are worthy to keep? If fish represent humans, how do we become worthy? What do you think of the novel’s suggestion that humans become worthy by letting God govern our hearts? • How would you react if you were Salome and your beliefs changed and your husband’s did not? • How is our church family broken by believing different things about Jesus? • Jesus asks the rhetorical question ‘Who is my mother?’ and answers with “anyone who hears God’s word and follows it.” How does this make Jesus’s mother feel? How does it make Jesus’s followers feel? Who is humbled and who is lifted up? • When a woman called out to bless the womb and breasts of Jesus’s mother, Jesus corrected her and said blessed rather is the woman who hears God’s word and puts it into practice. God values a woman for what actions? Where is a woman’s true value? Which women does God bless? • Joanna listens to Jesus and ends up sowing God’s word in the hearts of Manaen and Nadira. How is she hearing God’s word and following it? How is she experiencing God’s blessing? How would it feel for Joanna to be part of Jesus’s family?
	<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sow the seeds of God’s word, facilitate others to sow the seeds, to release our power and rely on God’s power

SESSION 6: EXPANDED, EXTENDED

Jesus expands the meaning of neighbour and extends Heaven’s realm to foreigners

CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
17	Mara: Avoiding New Neighbours Galilee, A.D. 29	10:1-39 22:35-40	6:7-13 12:28-34	10:25-37		Deuteronomy 6:5 Leviticus 19:18 Hosea 6:6
18	Joanna: Hope and Hopelessness Judea, A.D. 29	14:1-12	6:14-29	17:11-19	1:14 5:1-24	Leviticus 13:1-46 Leviticus 18: 1-30
19	Mara: The Bread of Life Galilee, A.D. 29	14:13-21 15:1-11	6:30-44 7:1-23 8:27-30	2:34-35 9:10-17	6:1-69	Deuteronomy 6:16 Deuteronomy 10:12 1 Samuel 15:22 Hosea 6:6 Micah 6:8 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

20	Joanna: Sympathizing with Shapash Syro-Phoenicia, A.D. 29	12:33-42 15:21-31	7:24-30	9:7-9	6:28- 29 15:16	Acts 21:4 Romans 8:38-39 Ephesians 2:8-9 1 Timothy 2:15
21	Mara: Seeing Thunder and Water Judea, A.D. 29			9:51-56	3:1-17 7:1-53	Numbers 16:28-35 Numbers 21:4-9 Deuteronomy 17:2-7 1 Samuel 16:7 2 Kings 1: 1-18 Isaiah 58:11 Romans 8:38-39
<p>Blessing: “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” Matthew 5:9 KJV.</p>						
<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the differences that divide Mara and Joanna? Why does Mara think Joanna is not her neighbour (Ch. 17)? Why does Joanna think Mara is not her neighbour? What separates us from our neighbours today? • What evidence is there that Herodias plotted John the Baptist’s death or that Antipas used Herodias in his plans for John’s death (Ch 18)? • What actions did the Samaritan person with leprosy take towards healing? What words did he say to Jesus? What was his reaction to being healed (Ch. 18)? • What actions did Manasseh at the pool of Bethesda take towards healing? What were his words and reactions? • How does Joanna feel when Jesus and the disciples treat Shapash, the Syro-Phoenician woman, like a dog (Ch. 20). When Jesus initially denies the woman’s request and then granted it, was Jesus testing her faith, changing his understanding of his mission, or was there another reason? • Jesus expands his ministry, healing the Syro-Phoenician woman, adopting women and foreigners into God’s family (Ch. 20). Does expanding the ministry encourage peace or division? How do the women in the novel work for peace? How can we expand ministries to foreigners? • How has the church stood in relation to racism through the centuries? When have Christians shown prejudice? • How is the subjugation of people based on race, ethnicity or bloodlines similar to the subjugation of people based on class, ability, sex or gender? • How does inequality impact the unity of the body of Christ? 						
<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To love our neighbours who are like us or who are foreign, who are minorities or marginalized, to reconcile and make peace. 						

SESSION 7: ENABLE TO ESCAPE						
Jesus enables us to escape from bondage and invites us into community						
CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
22	Joanna: Galia and her Accusers Escape Condemnation Judea, A.D. 29			15:24	3:5-6 8:1-59 9:1-34	Exodus 3: 13-14 Leviticus 20:10-12 Deuteronomy 17:5 Deuteronomy 22:22 Psalm 119:105 Galatians 5:19-21
23	Mara: Lost Coin, Lost Power, Lost Life Galilee, A.D. 29	17:14-23	9:14-32	9:22 9:38-45 15:1-10 16:1-15 17:5-6 18:1-8		Genesis 1:27 Exodus 23:25-26 Deuteronomy 7:12-15 Deuteronomy 28:1-6 Acts 2:32-32 Romans 6:4 Galatians 1:1
24	Joanna: Learning from Martha and Miriam Judea, A.D. 29	11:25-30 18:15-20 21:21-22 22:34-40	11:22-25	10:21-24 10:38-42 11:5-13	8:12	Leviticus 21:21 Deuteronomy 6:5-12 Deuteronomy 19:15 Psalm 66:18 Psalm 119:105 Psalm 139:13 Ecclesiastes 3:1 Isaiah 1:15-17 Isaiah 59:2—4 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Philippians 4:6-8 Titus 2:11-12 James 4:3 James 5:16 1 Peter 3:7 1 John 5:14
25	Joanna: Escapes after Rena is Healed on the Sabbath Judea, A.D. 29	23:37-39		12:13-21 13:10-17 13:34-35	10:1-40	Leviticus 24:16 Deuteronomy 22:5

26	Mara: Secrets to Success Judea, A.D. 30	5:31-32 16:13-28 18:2-7 19:1-30	8:31-33 9:33-40 10:1-31	9:49-50 16:18 18:15-30	2:19 10:18	Genesis 1:26-27 Genesis 12:13-19 Genesis 20:1-6 Exodus 20:1-17 Exodus 21:10 Exodus 21:22-27 Deuteronomy 5:7-21 Deuteronomy 21:10-14 Deuteronomy 24:1 Malachi 2:13-16 John 2:19 and 10:18 1 Corinthians 7:9, 15 1 Corinthians 7:32-34 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and 5:8 1 Peter 3:7
<p>Blessing: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” Matthew 5:7. In chapters 22-26 we see Jesus is merciful and strengthens marginalized people.</p>						
<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the female characters show mercy? • How do the women receive mercy and freedom from confinement or restrictions? • How are believers liberated or freed from the letter of the law? • How are believers liberated or freed from being slaves to unrighteousness? • How is Galia, the woman caught in adultery, enabled to escape from condemnation? • How are Galia’s accusers, who want to stone her, enabled to escape condemnation? • How does Jesus compare the sins of Galia and her accusers (Ch. 22)? • How is Rena, a woman physically bent over for eighteen years, enabled to escape from Satan’s bondage (Ch. 25)? • Why is it significant that Jesus calls Rena a daughter of Abraham? • How are wives enabled to escape a bad marriage (Ch. 26)? • How are believers enabled to escape expectations for marriage and childbearing (Ch. 26)? • How does God enable us to escape from anxiety, doubt, and low self-esteem? 						
<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognize our own faults as equal to those of others and offer grace, forgiveness, leniency and compassion. • To see others as children of Abraham and offer Christ as the key to unlock the chains of restrictions or limitations 						

SESSION 8: ESTEEMED, ENCOURAGED						
Jesus highly esteems you, values you, encourages you						
CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
27	Mara Ignored; Joanna Called Perea, A.D. 30	7:24 10:33 20:17-28 22:1-14	10:32-45	1:51-52 6:47 11:28 14:1-35 17:20-21 18:31-34 22:24-27	3:15	Genesis 16:13 Romans 8:11 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 Galatians 4:19 Philippians 4:8 1 Peter 3:18
28	Joanna: Two Murder Plots Perea, A.D. 30				11:1-53 12:9-11	Psalms 139:16 Galatians 4:19
29	Mara: An Impromptu Parade Judea, Sunday, 2 April, A.D. 30	21:1-17	11:1-10 11:15-19	19:28-48	1:1-4 2:13-23 12:12-26	Genesis 32: 1-21 Zechariah 9:9 1 Kings 1:33-52 2 Kings 9:13 Psalm 118:1-29 Acts 10:40 Acts 13:30
30	Joanna: Aroma of Adoration Judea, Tuesday, 4 April, A.D. 30	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:1-11	Leviticus 7:12-15 Psalm 116:1-18
31	Joanna: Watching for Heaven's Realm Judea, Wednesday, 5 April, A.D. 30	22:34-46 23:1-25 24:1-3 24:36-39 25:1-13 25:31-46 26:1-5 26:14-16	12:13-44 13:1-2 13:32-36 14:10-11	20:20-47 21:1-6 22:1-6		Exodus 3:6 Deuteronomy 25:5 Psalm 110:1 Isaiah 9:6
32	Joanna: Student of a Servant Judea, Thursday, 6 April, A.D. 30	26:17-35	14:12-31	22:7-34	13:1-38 14:1-27 15:4-20	Genesis 1:27 Exodus 2:1-10 Exodus 4:24-26

					16:1-33 19:31	Exodus 12:17-28 Exodus 31:12-17 Psalm 41:9 Proverbs 4:5-6 Isaiah 42:14 Zechariah 13:7 Acts 12:12 Romans 3:22, 8:17, 11:17 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Galatians 3:28-29 Ephesians 5:25-30 Philippians 2:3 Colossians 3:11 1 Peter 3:7
	<p>Blessing: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 5:10 KJV. In Chapters 27-32, we see how Jesus highly esteems all people, reaching out to affirm the women and the marginalized.</p>					
	<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the women disciples mistreated for doing what is right, persecuted or put at risk? • What marginalized people does today’s society mistreat or accuse of being morally wrong? • What is Miriam of Bethany doing when Jesus says she has made the right choice (Ch. 24)? • Compare the confession of faith by Martha (John 11:27) and Peter (Matthew 16:16, Mark 8:29, Luke 9:20). • Why does Jesus ask “who do you say that I am” instead of telling them who he is? • How does Jesus contrast the way pagans rule and how it will be in God’s kingdom (Ch. 27)? • How would you compare humility, low self-esteem, pride, arrogance, self confidence, and self-awareness? • The novel portrays the Last Supper as the Passover meal attended by men and women in Jesus’s family of faith. How does it feel for you to see both men and women present? • What is the impact of Jesus telling Joanna to stretch out her feet, accept Jesus’s invitation and become one of his people (Ch. 32)? • Who can be adopted into God’s family and receive the same inheritance rights as the sons of Abraham? (Romans 8:15-17, 1 John 3:1, 1 Peter 3:7 Matt. 25:34 Gal. 3:29) • Jesus says that in God’s realm, there is neither male nor female, Greek nor Jew, slave nor master (Ch. 32) 					

	<p>consistent with Romans 3:22, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11. What does that mean for today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salome says humans share God’s spiritual, intellectual, compassionate and creative nature (Ch. 23). Are all humans in God’s full image? How are humans in God’s image? (Genesis 5:1) What traits of God do we portray? • While God is neither male nor female, the novel refers to the Holy Spirit with female imagery and pronouns. The Bible refers to the Spirit being the wind or breath of life, raising Jesus to life, and giving birth to our new eternal life (John 3:6, John 20:22, Romans 8:10-11, 1 Peter 3:18). It also refers to the Spirit as a comforter, advocate, counsellor, teacher and guide (John 14:16-26, Romans 8:26-27). The Holy Spirit dwells in both male and female believers and allows both to prophesy (Acts 2:2-4, 17-18). How does it feel to see God as both male and female? • Paul refers to himself in both male and female terms, calling himself a mother giving birth to spiritual children (1 Timothy 1:2, Galatians 4:19, 1 Thess. 2:7). Peter and John also do (1 Peter 5:13, 3 John 1:4). How can you describe yourself in both male and female terms? 					
	<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect God’s image and show your righteousness in the way we love one another. 					
<p>SESSION 9: EMBRACED God embraces you when you need comfort</p>						
CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
33	Joanna and Mara: Followers Scatter Judea, Thursday, 6 April, A.D. 30	26:36-56	14:32-52	22:39-53	18:1-14	Exodus 3: 13-14
34	Mara and Joanna: Justice is Corrupted Judea, Friday morning, 7 April, A.D. 30	26:57-68 27:1-31	14:53-65 15:1-20	22:54 22:63-71 23:1-25	18:15-40 19: 1-16	
35	Mara and Joanna: The Lamb is Sacrificed Judea, Friday afternoon, 7 April, A.D. 30	27:32-66 27:61	15:21-41	23:26-49 23:55	1:29 2:34-35 19:16-37	Psalms 22:1-18 Proverbs 16:8 Isaiah 49:15-16
36	Mara: Mourning on the Sabbath Sabbath (Saturday), 8 April, A.D. 30	26:69-75 27:57-61	14:66-72 15:42-47 16:10	1:46-56 22:54-62 23:50-56	18:16-27 19:38-42	Exodus 3: 13-14 1 Samuel 2:1-10 Jeremiah 23:5-6
	<p>Blessing: “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted” Matthew 5:4 KJV. In chapters 33-36 we see the followers of Jesus in mourning; they have lost hope.</p>					

	<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the things Jesus’s followers have lost? What dreams and expectations felt unfulfilled? • As Mara mourns, what does she regret? • How do the women cope with their grief and lost hope? • How have the women been blessed while they were mourning? • What helps you when you are mourning? • Was Jesus acting under the Father’s instruction or his own will? Discuss whether God had authority over Jesus (John 3:16) or whether Jesus had authority over himself, to humble himself and become human (Philippians 2:8-9, John 10:18) and to raise himself up (John 2:19-22). • Jesus says that he and the Father are one being (John 10:30, John 14:10-11). Peter calls believers living stones creating a temple for God (1 Peter 2:4-12). Paul also calls all believers temples of God (2 Corinthians 6:16). Being temples of God means God is in us. At the same time, all believers are the body of Christ: we are in God (1 Corinthians 12:27, Romans 12:4-5). What does it mean that God is in us, and we are in God?
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	<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To remember those who mourn or grieve, to listen to them and their needs
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SESSION 10: EMPOWERED
 Jesus empowers women as disciples, apostles, prophets, evangelists, ministers

CH.	Chapter Title:	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Other Biblical References
37	Mara: Angels and a Stranger Judea, Sunday, 9 April, A.D. 30	1:1-17 28:1-7	16:1-8 16:12-13	1:5-25 24:1-35	2:19 8:32 10:18 20:1-10 20:19-23	Genesis 12:1-5 Genesis 17:17 Genesis 18:10-14 Genesis 27:19-29 Genesis 29:30-35 Genesis 38:1-30 Exodus 2:1-10 and 7-11 Joshua 2:1-21 and Joshua 5:1 Joshua 6:2-25 Ruth 3:1-13 and 4:1-10 2 Samuel 7:12-14 2 Samuel 11:1-5

						1 Kings 1:13-31 1 Chronicles 28:5-6 Isaiah 40:3 Isaiah 49:1-6 Isaiah 53:4-9 Jeremiah 23:5 Micah 5:2 Zechariah 9:9 Acts 2:32-32 Romans 6:4, 8:11 Galatians 1:1 Hebrews 11: 8-40 Hebrews 12:1-3 1 Peter 3:18
38	Joanna: Jesus Appears! Jerusalem, Judea, late Sunday, 9 April, A.D. 30	28:8-15	16:9-14	1:46-55 24:36-49	20:11-18 20:24-29	1 Samuel 15:22 Micah 6:8 Acts 10:40 Acts 13:30 Galatians 4:19 2 Timothy 1:7
39	Mara: Reunion and Reconciliation Jerusalem, Judea, A.D. 30	28:16-20	16:15-20	24:50-53	7:5 11:9-10 16:7 20:19-23 21:1-17	Genesis 16:13 Isaiah 42:14 Acts 1:8 Acts 10:40-43 Acts 13:30-35 1 Corinthians 15:4-9 Galatians 4:19
40	Joanna: The Gift of the Holy Spirit Jerusalem, Judea, A.D. 30	5:14-16 6:4 12:38-41			3:16-17 13:34-35 20:30-31	2 Samuel 7:2-13 Psalm 118:22 Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 Hosea 11:1 Joel 2:28-29 Acts 1:1-26 Acts 2:1-47 Acts 4:32-35

						Acts 7:48 Acts 17: 24-28 Galatians 4:4-7 Ephesian 2:8-10, 19 James 2:8, 9, 18, 26 1 Peter 2:4-9 and 4:8-10 1 John 4: 7-12
	Epilogue	8:14		4:38-39	4:29 7:5 11:25-27 19:25	Amos 9:11-12 Acts 6:1-5 Acts 7:1-60 Acts 10:34-35 Acts 12:1-18 Acts 15:13 Acts 21:17-26 Romans 2:11 1 Corinthians 9:5 Galatians 1:13-20 Galatians 2:9 James 2:8-9
	<p>Blessing: At the conclusion of the eight sayings known as the Beatitudes comes a final blessing: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid” Matthew 5:11-14 KJV.</p>					
	<p>Questions for Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter tells believers to endure if people insult them for following Christ, just as Christ endured when people insulted him for doing what was right (1 Peter 4:12-19). Is Peter saying believers should always endure insults, mistreatment and abuse? Compare suffering for being a Christian to suffering abuse. • Before Christ, Jewish law only permitted Levite priests to enter the Holy of Holies; on Christ’s death the curtain is torn, breaking the barrier between people and God (Ch. 35, Matthew 27:51, Ephesians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 3:18). Now who is permitted to approach God? Who can be a priest? (1 Peter 2:9). • Paul says that Jesus broke the barriers between people, fellow citizens, adopted into God’s family, equal parts of one body (Ephesians 2:19). What walls of division and hostility has Christ broken? What walls remain? 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gospels say that Jesus appeared first to Marie of Magdala (John 20:11-18), to other women on the path (Matthew 28:8-10), to Clopas and companion (Mark 16:12, Luke 24:35), then the disciples in Jerusalem. Women were not recognized as legal witnesses, so why might God have chosen to have women be the first witnesses? • Do you agree with the description of Marie of Magdala as an apostle to the apostles? • A list of first witnesses in 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 seems to be a creed quoted by early Christians. Why are no women named in this list of first witnesses? Why is Peter named as first witness when the Gospels do not name him as a witness? What may have been the purpose of this creed? • When Jesus gives his great commission to spread God’s word to all nations, did he commission both men and women (Matthew 28:19-20)? • As characters in the novel declare their belief, Jesus names their gift and tells them how God will use them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To Joanna: “I will use you to build my realm, and you will sow seeds that produce an abundant harvest of fruit. Your labour will result in spiritual children of all races joining the family of God.” (Ch.32) ○ To Susannah: “Through you, many will understand messages from God’s prophets.” ○ To Mara, “I will use you to encourage my followers, and your labour will nourish spiritual children in the family of God.” (Ch. 39) ○ To you: What gifts did God give you, and how might you use them? • The Old Testament portrays women as midwives, healers, teachers, farmers, cloth-makers, prophets, judges, political and military leaders. The New Testament shows women as eyewitnesses, disciples, patrons, deacons, and apostles. Can women perform these functions today? • The Bible shows that God gifted and called people of all races to serve, including Rahab, a Canaanite, Ruth, a Moabite, Bathsheba, a Hittite. Can people of all nations serve God today? • What makes believers the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16)? Is the instruction to be salt of the earth different for men and women? What is the impact if the flavour is lost, the light is hidden, or believers keep God’s word to themselves? What happens if women are restricted from being salt and light? • How are we to use God’s gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7). What happens if women do not follow their call to be leaders, preachers, and pastors? • Does God want us to be timid or shy about our gifts or does God give both men and women a spirit of power, boldness, and love (2 Timothy 1:7)?
	<p>Prayer Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For women and minorities who preach, teach, prophesy, evangelize, and serve as the salt of the earth and light of the world.

Reflections from Christian women leaders in the 1800s:

Sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimke wrote “An Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States” teaching male ministers that slavery was wrong. In response, ministers wrote a Pastoral Letter in 1837 denouncing all women preachers and reformers. Here is an excerpt from the Letter in Response to the Pastoral Letter, written by Sarah Grimke in 1837:

The Lord Jesus defines the duties of his followers in his Sermon on the Mount. He lays down grand principles by which they should be governed, without any reference to sex or condition: Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. I follow him through all his precepts and find him giving the same directions to women as to men, never even referring to the distinction now so strenuously insisted upon between masculine and feminine virtues: this is one of the anti-Christian traditions of men which are taught instead of the commandments of God. Men and women were CREATED EQUAL; they are both moral and accountable beings, and whatever is right for man to do, is right for woman.

Source: <https://users.wfu.edu/zulick/340/grimkeletter.html>

Author note:

Forgotten Followers from Broken to Bold allows readers to see women in the Gospel stories and how God values women and equally authorizes women and men to serve, speak, and lead. I hope this Reference Note stimulates reflection and discussion and brings healing and hope.

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