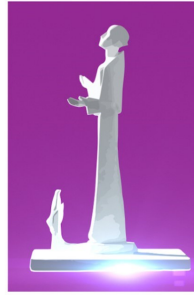


# EXPLORING THE BIBLE

a St Francis College short course



## Theme 4: Reading the New Testament

### Question 4a. What is your favourite Bible story?

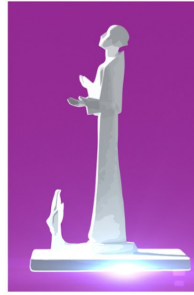
1. What appeals to you about hearing others tell about their favourite Bible story? What do you notice about the way they tell their story?
2. Identify a story or character from the Bible that made an impact on you. What was it about the story that made such an impact?
3. In what ways might you explore that story further? Consider exploring the context out of which the story was written, finding other versions of the story or just reading it several times over to revisit the characters and message.

#### **Marian Free**

Well if you were to hear me preach you'd think that most of them were. So, I've tried really hard to narrow it down. If I have to narrow it right down probably the one I would go to is Hosea Chapter 11. It's not a story but if you know the book of Hosea it starts off comparing Israel to a prostitute because they go after all the foreign gods. Hosea is supposed to 'marry' the prostitute, so it's all that kind of symbolism. There are chapters of God's anger and what God is going to do and you get to chapter 11 and God says something like 'how can I give you up?' (I'm going to cry!) 'It was I who taught you to walk, I bent down and held you to my cheek' and it's just, (particularly when you see it in the Old Testament context when most people think of God as distant and more judgemental), you just see that beautiful, beautiful parental image. The image is in my head of a father, a parent bending down and holding the child to their cheek. It usually moves me to tears.

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## **Greg Jenks**

I think today, (it varies), I'd say my favourite New Testament story is one that isn't even really in the New Testament and that's probably why I like it. It's the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery and then the people drag her to Jesus and want him to validate their self righteous condemnation of her, and want him to agree that she should be stoned to death.

We all know it ends with the famous line 'let the one who is without sin cast the first stone' and one by one, beginning with the older, they all begin to walk away and its just Jesus and the woman left. It's a classic story in all kinds of ways, including the fact that it's not in the best manuscripts of any of the 2 gospels that it's sometimes found in. So we sometimes find it in Luke, we sometimes find it in John, but it's not in the best manuscripts of Luke or John. It was too good a story to leave out so it wriggled its way back in the Bible, even though the Church said it didn't belong.

I like that!