

Finding Our Place in God's Story

Psalm 40:1–11; John 1:29–42

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Every once in a while, most of us ask a quiet question: *Where do I fit now?*

It doesn't usually come during a crisis. More often, it shows up in ordinary moments—when life looks different than it used to,
when our energy isn't what it once was,
when the church feels smaller,
or the world feels faster than we are.

We start to wonder whether our most meaningful chapters are behind us—or whether God is still writing something with our lives.

Today's scriptures meet us right there.

Psalm 40 begins simply:

“I waited patiently for the Lord.”

Not *I figured it out*.

Not *I powered through*.

Just—I waited.

Waiting is hard. It can feel unproductive, invisible, even discouraging. The psalmist doesn't pretend otherwise. He talks about being stuck in a pit, in the mud, unsure of his footing. That image rings true for many seasons of life—times when we don't know what's next, or when we're aware of all we *can't* do anymore.

But then comes the turning point:

“The Lord inclined to me and heard my cry.”

God doesn't scold the psalmist for being stuck.

God leans in. God listens.

And God lifts him out and sets his feet on solid ground.

That's often how faith works—not all at once, not dramatically, but quietly and faithfully. At the time, it feels like waiting. Only later do we realize that God was carrying us the whole time.

Then the psalmist says, “God put a new song in my mouth.”

Not a louder song.

Not a flashier one.

Just a *new* one—shaped by experience, by trust, by having been held through something hard.

And then this line: “I delight to do your will, O my God.”

That's not about accomplishment. It's about belonging. The psalmist has found his place in God's story—not by being impressive, but by being faithful.

We see the same thing in the Gospel.

John the Baptist sees Jesus coming and says, "Here is the Lamb of God." And that's it. John's role is to point. He doesn't center himself. And when his own disciples begin to follow Jesus instead, John lets them go.

John knows where he fits—and he's at peace with it.

The disciples who follow Jesus don't know yet. They trail behind him quietly. Jesus turns and asks a question that still feels personal:

"What are you looking for?"

Not *What do you believe?*

Not *Do you understand everything?*

Just—*What are you looking for?*

The disciples answer awkwardly: "Where are you staying?"

In other words, *Can we be with you? Can we stay close?*

Jesus says, "Come and see."

That's how discipleship begins. Not with certainty. Just with presence. With staying close enough to notice.

Andrew then goes and finds his brother and says, "We have found the Messiah." That's all he says. And that's enough. God's story moves forward through small acts—through noticing, pointing, inviting.

Which brings me to something I've learned over the years. Some of the most faithful moments of discipleship don't look like much at the time.

I once visited a woman who could no longer come to church. She told me she missed sitting in the pew, missed singing the hymns, missed feeling like she was "part of things." Then she said, very honestly, "I don't know what good I am anymore."

And then—almost casually—she mentioned that every Sunday morning, at the hour worship began, she sat in her chair at home, opened her old bulletin, and prayed. She prayed for the people she knew would be there.

She prayed for the pastor. For the choir. For the children she once taught. For the friends she worried had forgotten her.

She didn't think it counted for much.

I want you to hear this: she was still very much in God's story. She was still waiting on the Lord. Still bearing witness. Still helping hold the church together in ways no one else could see.

She wasn't doing something new. She was doing something faithful.

That's often how it works. God doesn't give us a new role. So often, God deepens the one we already have. Sometimes the calling becomes quieter—but no less holy.

John the Baptist pointed, then stepped back.

Andrew invited one person, Peter the Rock (Rockie).

The psalmist waited and trusted.

And that woman prayed in her chair.

All of them had a place.

Finding our place in God's story doesn't mean trying to be who we once were. It means trusting that God is still at work through who we are now.

Jesus still turns toward us and asks, 'What are you looking for?' And he still says, 'Come and see.'"

Someone once asked the theologian Paul Tillich what mattered most—after all the books, all the thinking, all the questions. And he answered simply, "*Jesus loves me, this I know.*"

Not because he had figured everything out.

And not because life had been easy.

Just because that truth was enough to hold everything else.

In a few moments, we will sing a song many of us learned when we were children—"*This Little Light of Mine.*"

And maybe that's the heart of it.

Faith, at its deepest, doesn't have to be complicated.

Jesus loves me.

And that light still shines.

John pointed to Jesus.

Andrew brought one person.

A woman prayed in her chair.

That's a light. And it still shines.

So when we sing "This Little Light", receive it not as a children's song, but as a reminder: the light God placed in you has not gone out. Amen.