

# INSPIRED DISCUSSION GUIDE

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**Dates/Time/Location:** Oct. 6 & 20, Nov. 3 & 17, 2024 @ 9:00 AM, Guild Room

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## I. INTRO & BLESSING

"The truth is rarely pure and never simple." – *Oscar Wilde*

"I'm in no rush to patch up these questions. God save me from the day when stories of violence, rape, and ethnic cleansing inspire within me anything other than revulsion. I don't want to become a person who is unbothered by these texts, and if Jesus is who he says he is, then I don't think he wants me to either. There are parts of the Bible that inspire, parts that perplex, and parts that leave you with an open wound. I'm still wrestling, and like Jacob, I will wrestle until I am blessed. God hasn't let go of me yet." – *Rachel Held Evans*

**God, inspire us. Perplex us. Wound us. Heal us. Don't let us go. Amen.**

## II. DISCUSSION GUIDE

a. **What we'll discuss:** Each of the book's sections is a largely self-contained exploration of a set of Bible stories. Since we only have four sessions together, we'll examine four sections of the book:

- i. **October 6:** *Introduction* (pages xi to xxiv)
- ii. **October 20:** *The Temple & Origin Stories* (pages 1 to 28)
- iii. **November 3:** *The Water & Gospel Stories* (pages 141 to 164)
- iv. **November 17, 2024:** *The Sea & Fish Stories* (pages 165 to 190)

b. **How we'll discuss the book/discussion guidelines:**

- i. Start at 9 AM and end at 9:45 AM to respect everyone's schedules.
- ii. "Popcorn" approach – jump right in. We won't pick individuals or "circle up."
- iii. It's OK to simply observe. That's participating too.
- iv. We'll start with the discussion questions I've already shared but we should feel free to move beyond those as we feel called.
- v. Offer succinct (brief but meaty) responses and observations. (3 sentences?)
- vi. Offer responses that avoid trying to "fix" situations or offer advice.
- vii. Share from your own life, don't comment on the experiences of others.
- viii. There are no right or wrong "answers." It's about being open to the Spirit.
- ix. Questions? Thoughts?

## III. INTRODUCTIONS

a. This is the one time we'll go around the circle and ask everyone to contribute. Simply share:

- i. Your name
- ii. Why you chose to join the group