

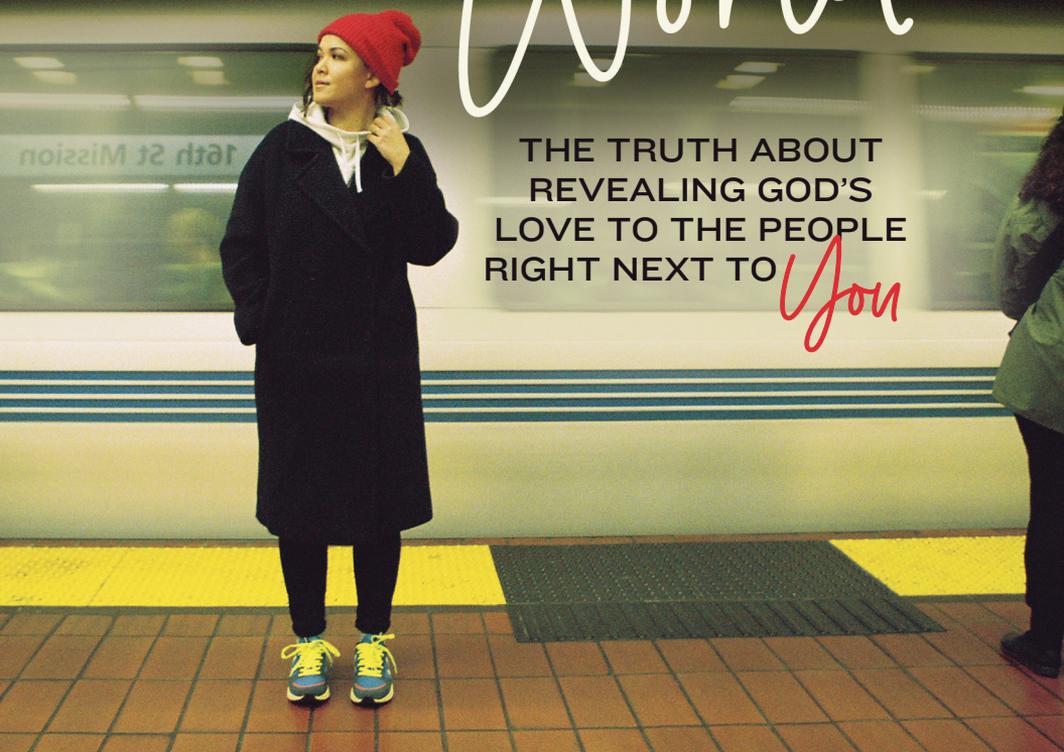
HOSANNA WONG

FOREWORD BY CHRISTINE CAINE

How (not)
to Save the
World

THE TRUTH ABOUT
REVEALING GOD'S
LOVE TO THE PEOPLE
RIGHT NEXT TO

You



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to Save the
World

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THE TRUTH ABOUT
REVEALING GOD'S
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HOSANNA WONG



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How (Not) to Save the World

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To my dad.

Thank you for how fearlessly you lived and how deeply you loved. Thank you for teaching me how to talk about Jesus, how to fight for those far from God, and how to shoot free-throws. I'm still trying my best at all three. You're my hero. I'll love you forever. I'll see you soon.

Love, your little girl

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Foreword

“Mummy, do you think God can use someone like me? I’m not like you. I don’t have a big dramatic past or exciting salvation story. My life is pretty normal. Is it possible to make a difference in the world if I don’t have a powerful testimony?”

When my eldest daughter, Catherine, asked me that question, it stopped me in my tracks. She was in her midteens and had just returned from a week of church camp where a compelling youth evangelist shared his amazing story of being lost and found, of being strung out on drugs, addicted to alcohol, and wandering in the darkness before stepping into the light of Christ—all in hopes of inspiring teens like Catherine to give their lives to Jesus.

As an evangelist for more than three decades, I have been the speaker at camps like this countless times, so I completely understood the purpose of his message. But it left Catherine with the idea that because she *didn’t* have a testimony that included brokenness, filled with pain and addiction, she didn’t have much to say about her Christian faith. It left her feeling like she didn’t have, and couldn’t be, an effective witness.

It was sobering for me, as a mother, to realize that I had also missed communicating to my own daughter the true meaning of the

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gospel. Like so many others, she has been in church all her life but still does not really understand the heart of the good news. I had to share with her the truth of the gospel because what she was hearing, in so many words, was that if you had a really bad past, you needed Jesus. But if you didn't have a really bad past, you didn't need Him—or at least not as much.

Nothing could be further from the truth, but that was the point: she didn't fully understand the truth.

As I began gathering my thoughts to help her realize her own incredible testimony, it occurred to me that before any of us can grasp the good news, first we need to comprehend the bad news. Before I was alive in Christ, I was dead. We all were.

As Catherine and I began to talk, I explained how Jesus came to make dead people alive, not bad people good. We were all dead on arrival, and Jesus came to give us new life. And yet we seem to easily connect the idea that “I did a bad thing, so I need forgiveness” rather than “There's none righteous, no, not one,” including myself—whether I did a bad thing or not (Rom. 3:10 ΝΚΙΥ).

I walked Catherine through the Word—the only source of absolute truth—to help her understand the real meaning of the gospel. To help her realize she has a story to tell because the gospel isn't about our behavior or works; it's about Jesus' grace—for by grace we have been saved though faith, not through ourselves or by our own works (Eph. 2:8). Grace is a gift from God. Faith is about what He did for us. About His love for us.

Sharing this life-changing truth with the people right next to us is what my dear friend Hosanna has laid out beautifully in her book, *How (Not) to Save the World*. Ever so thoughtfully, she takes the last command Jesus gave us, the one He took the time to tell us on His way to heaven, and shows us how to actually follow it. Jesus said,

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19 CSB).

Through page after page of encouragement, Hosanna helps us all understand that Jesus’ first invitation is for us to know Him and then to partner with Him on His mission for others to know Him. To go and make disciples. She helps us understand that we have been created to and equipped for that very mission, in our lifetimes, with our own personalities, passions, and positions, including the ways we feel inadequate.

By tackling the lies we often believe—lies that hold us back from being real and being ourselves—she moves us forward to partner with God on His mission to save the world. She defuses the pressure, the guilt, the defeat, and the misguided ideas we have believed, then helps us overcome our fear of failing and the fear of how people might respond. She understands that what we need and want to say has been in us all along, and we weren’t meant to do it alone.

By sharing her own experiences, Hosanna helps us understand that we *can* tell our friends. We *can* let His joy seep through our lives. By you and me extending invitations, having conversations, and sharing our stories, she shows us that we *can* reveal God’s love to the people right next to us.

As a fellow Jesus-follower, an evangelist, and a mother, I couldn’t be happier knowing Hosanna is helping yet another generation understand God’s mission, the most important mission in the world.

The power in this book is that Hosanna lives the message she shares on these pages. She writes so poignantly, “At the end of our lives, when we see Jesus face-to-face, we will not be held accountable for what others told us to do and not do. We will only be held accountable for what God said to do, and if we did it.”

Jesus told us to go and make disciples.

Let Hosanna inspire you the way she has inspired me—to be yourself and allow God to use you to help fulfill His mission to save the world.

—CHRISTINE CAINE

Founder, A21 and Propel Women

Confessions from an Expert

Ten years ago I packed my life into suitcases and started traveling the country to share the story of Jesus through spoken-word poetry. I didn't have a plan or a home address and wouldn't for years. And there were a whole lot of things I wasn't sure of.

I wasn't sure how to love the people right next to me.

I wasn't sure how to step into what God was calling me to do.

I wasn't sure how to embrace community, or even what I thought about the church.

Put simply, I wasn't sure how to actually make Jesus known to real people. Living on mission for God? I wasn't sure what that even meant.

So I fumbled through it—a lot. And I often got things oh so very wrong.

That's why I've written this book.

It turns out, I'm an expert on how (not) to save the world. I've believed so many lies about myself, my purpose and calling, and the community of the church.

These lies have *not* led me to confidence in who I am created to be or closeness to the One who created me. They have not led me to greater purpose, greater peace, or greater impact. Instead they have

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left me feeling exhausted, depleted, guilty, prideful, and at times, apathetic, giving up altogether on Jesus' call to show the world His love.

And, without intending to, I've pushed away those I love. I've given more monologues than dialogues. I've cared about being right more than caring for a relationship. I've wanted to pass on the story of Jesus but haven't felt smart enough, skilled enough, or spiritual enough for such an important task. I've wanted to say yes and step into what I've felt God calling me to do, but fears of failing have caused me to step back.

Through faithfully studying God's Word and fumbling through my own flawed progress, I've discovered something better: the truth about revealing God's love to the people right next to us.

This is the book I needed ten years ago—the book that would have told me what I want to tell you now:

- You can fight for the people you love.
- You can say yes to what God is calling you to do without fear of failing.
- The church is better when you're in it, and His community unified together is His favorite plan to help a hurting world.
- The most important mission in the world will absolutely require your participation. You've been equipped for it. You've been created for it. You've been handmade and handpicked for it.
- The details of your life's story—who you are, what you love, and all that you've been through—are exactly what God wants to use for this exact moment in time.

It turns out, we *can* naturally share the truth about Jesus in our everyday lives. We *can* let those around us know how valuable they

are. We *can* fight for those we love and a world Jesus loves. There *is* a way for every person we know to realize how loved they are by God.

I've written this book so that every chapter exposes a lie that has held us back from showing God's love. We have a choice: believe the lies or live out the truth.

The truth is better.

People need to know how much God loves them. Somebody needs to tell them. And it's us. It's me and you. We're the ones God has picked for this very purpose. Our details and our experiences have uniquely equipped us to show people who God is within our lifetimes.

Let's not wait another second. Join me in discovering the simple truths that can set us free and set those we love free as well.

Ready?

Together, let's go.

How (not) to Save the World:

#1 | Rely on Your Own Power

The first time I witnessed a murder I was nine years old.

I was sitting on crimson brick steps that were growing ever warmer from the blazing summer sun, next to my three-year-old brother, Elijah, in a run-down public park in inner-city San Francisco. I grew up in this park. One side was covered with patches of browning grass, the other with climbing brick steps, hidden by layers of faded graffiti. Though, without traditional swings and slides, our imaginations created colorful worlds, making this playground our mansion in the sky, our castle in a distant land.

When I was still in my mom's belly, my parents founded an outreach to those living on the streets in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. Most of my childhood was spent in this park with my family holding church services and Bible studies multiple days a week, handing out thousands of lunches and items of clothing, playing chess with our friends and watching basketball games. Both sides of the

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park were occupied by hundreds without homes, battling addiction, recently released from prison, or running away from . . . something. To many, this was a dangerous destination where needles slayed arms like knights slayed dragons, where runaways and misfits strayed if they had no place to go. To us, this is where we created a family. This is where we had church.

Gang members of all ages and backgrounds came to our services, and, sure, *sometimes* violent brawls would break out, but no fear, we all quickly became good friends with the local police officers stationed across the street. Fights would be broken up, and we'd continue with service. That sort of week was typical. (Later in life I learned that when people asked me if I grew up in church and I responded yes, it didn't mean the *exact* same thing to everyone as it did to me. *Fair enough.*)

When screeches of laughter would suddenly ring out from the park's beat-up basketball court, many of us would gather to watch the latest scrimmage, squeezing in on the sides of the cement court or surrounding steps, all delicately painted with pigeon droppings. Gated by tall, Emerald city–like fences, but with chipped black paint and explicit words carved into them (much different from Dorothy's dreamy utopia), there was nothing Oz, fake, or hidden about this park on the corner of Jones and Eddy Street. Still, for me, there was no place like home.

The trouble that sad, scorching day started when hateful insults echoed between the city buildings towering over me and Elijah. Before long, the two groups of people shouting faced off directly in front of us. Their words were some of the worst that humans could come up with—some words I had never heard before. The two groups hated each other. They hated each other with such intensity for their differences that they were both prepared to kill because of it.

The first knife pulling rearranged the air, and I failed to shield

my brother's eyes in time. My body froze as I watched the violence unfold just feet away from us. Stab. Slice. *Stop!* I wanted to scream. But I didn't. I could not process what I was seeing. *Am I allowed be here? Do they see us sitting here?* Another knife appeared. Stab. Slice. Swarm. A group of people surrounded the scene, and I couldn't make out what was happening except that small fights were breaking out among the bigger fight. That part is a hurried blur. It was not like the fight scenes in movies. There was no music. There were no camera angles helping me know where to look. It was confusing. It was loud. Fast. Then the crowd backed off. Two men seemed to be hugging. But they weren't. As one man released his embrace, another fell to the cracked concrete with a knife lodged in his chest. The various groups jumped the chipped fence and fled the park. I couldn't tell who'd won . . . it did not feel like there were winners that day. Bodies lay limp on the ground. I couldn't see how many. As I stepped closer to see who was still fighting for their life, and who was already gone, the police ran in, crowds blocked my view, and an ambulance took someone away.

Our utopia would never be the same.

Looking down at my worn-out sneakers, grass stained from the days I'd run freely in this park I loved so much, there was a queasy feeling in my stomach that I had accidentally just grown up a little. I knew I had seen something I was not supposed to see. I looked at my little brother and felt a feeling I had never felt before.

Guilt.

This was the first moment I remember feeling like I was supposed to save somebody, but I didn't.

I replayed the event in my mind for weeks after, wishing I could go back and do something different. A hurricane of *should haves* swarmed within my mind and took over my thoughts.

I should have picked up my brother and run away.

I should have screamed for help.

I should have sprinted toward the fight and tried to break it up.

Maybe a little girl screaming and jumping up and down would have stopped everyone in their tracks. I should have at least tried! I should have done more.

The early innerworkings of guilt were planted within my frail nine-year-old heart. They continued to sprout like weeds. I signed up for as many community outreaches as possible, but our neighborhood's needs never seemed to lessen. I tried to invite my basketball teammates to church with me, but none of them accepted the invitation. I tried to do more, save more, and save better, and instead, the disappointing results left me insecure and angry.

- Angry at the people in my life that I couldn't help.
- Angry at the circumstances I couldn't change.
- Angry at myself for being powerless to save people.

From a young age I felt helpless amid blaringly obvious brokenness. The crooked streets I grew up on never seemed to straighten out, and though I strived to be increasingly braver and more diligent in my part to make a difference, I could not shake the haunting feeling of how meaningless my small actions were in the grand scheme of things. I wanted to save the world. But how?

WE NEED A SAVIOR

No matter how or where we grew up, many of us know what it feels like to have seen things we were not sure we should see and learned things we were not prepared to know. Over the years, we've grown

overwhelmed and disheartened by the insurmountable needs around us. We have witnessed hearts broken within our own homes, hateful words echoing not amid downtown buildings but among the walls of our houses. We've seen the people right next to us battle with loss, hopelessness, and pain. And we've seen people far from us experience it too. We've seen murder on television or in videos replayed on our cell phones. We have been flooded with never-ending slideshows of famines, global pandemics, and violence in our own streets and across the world. We've seen towers fall. We've watched bombs go off during races. We've seen the horrific numbers of humans who have been abducted, abused, and sold like property and the faces of precious children without parents. We've heard the sound of a clenched fist being connected with a face in a fight—without cinematic sound effects, a true knuckle-to-cheekbone thump is far less entertaining. This is not like the movies. This is not fun. And there are no end credits in sight.

We are all painfully aware that our loved ones are hurting. We are terrifyingly in tune to the fact that our world is in dire need of saving. This is not a book about how much pain our world is in. Instead, this is a book for people who want to be a part of the solution.

We want to save the world. But how?

How do we save when we feel powerless?

How do we save when our solutions have missed the mark?

How do we save when we feel frozen in fears of failing?

I want to remind you, or perhaps let you in on this freeing truth for the first time:

- Jesus is the Savior.
- Jesus has the power to save.
- We do not.

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At an early age I believed the lie that as a Jesus-follower it was now my duty to save everyone around me. *If I didn't then I was falling short.*

The truth is freeing.

It is not our job to save.

Jesus is the Savior of the world. That task was His calling. Not ours. You and I actually don't have the power to do it. That's why Jesus came to do it. And great news: He *already* saved the world.

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Thank God. (*Literally*)

We were not created to wear the weight of everyone's salvation on our shoulders. This leads to an unhealthy amount of pressure, resulting in ungodly feelings of guilt and insecurity, especially when we've tried our best to do something and still haven't seen results.

- We've tried to talk with our family members about Jesus but couldn't find the right words or the right moment.
- We've tried to start a small group to mentor young couples, but our doorbell never rang, and our homemade meals grew cold.
- We've tried to help our nephew get into a recovery program, but we waited for him in the parking lot for hours, and he never showed.

When we see *ourselves* as saviors, we can start finding our identity in the outcome of what we do, at times seeing ourselves as greater than

we are—basking in the success of our achievements and overly self-assured in our savior-like abilities.

At other times we see ourselves as less than we are—feeling disproportionately insecure, empty, and meaningless when we feel like we've failed at an important task. We can begin hurting ourselves and others from the all-consuming unrest, burning ourselves out by the insistent striving, or finding ourselves frozen from doing *anything* due to fear of failing.

Relying on our own power will not help us, those we love, or a world far from God. We need someone more powerful than us.

SATURDAY-MORNING SUPERHEROES

As a little girl I would leap out of bed early on Saturday mornings to watch the latest episode of *The Adventures of Batman & Robin*. I would press up against the cold glass screen of our small, static television and get lost in the innerworkings of Gotham City as the heroic duo combatted the evil schemes of Two-Face, the Riddler, Catwoman, and of the best villain of all time, the Joker. (Not up for debate.)

There's something exhilarating about watching the good guys overtake the bad guys, coming out of nowhere in the exact moment of dire need with impressive skills and explosive weapons in the sky—even in clearly uncomfortable tights. (Dear *Project Runway*, please do a hero-makeover challenge *soon*. As the great poet Beyoncé once said, "Let me upgrade you."¹) When the Justice League cartoon began, and it featured a whole host of heroes—including the one and only truth-lassoing Wonder Woman—I was sold. Girls could be heroes too? I was all in. I wanted to know about superheroes. I wanted to *be* a superhero.

The religious people of Jesus' day were also looking for a hero. Just

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like us, the brokenness of the world was glaringly obvious to them, and they believed a king, a warrior, was coming to defeat the evil empires, fight off the tyrannical leaders, and forcefully turn over the corrupted governments of the day. Also, hopefully, he would judge and destroy all of those horrible sinners everywhere. They awaited a hero's arrival.

And someone did come. He had more power than they could ever comprehend, and yet He didn't come to take over with forceful power at all.

Instead, they were introduced to a Savior not participating in remarkable battles, showing off his spectacular strength, nor lobbying for titles to invoke his impressive status; no, He gave up His status. In a world where we naturally seek glory and applaud those we also find glorious, we surprisingly find that the One who already had all the glory did not aim to be above us but came to be *with* us. The distinguished Savior emptied Himself of His outward splendor and “made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” to serve other humans (Phil. 2:7 NIV). He came to hang out with, love, and serve the ones the religious people hoped He'd judge and destroy. *And for the record*, He also came for the judgmental religious people—sinners who were much more eager to point out other's sins than to consider their own. He came to forgive and save them too.

It turns out, in our quest to be Savior-like, to be Christlike, and to live like Jesus would, servanthood is the example we're given. The call to be like Jesus is not a call to save. It is a call to serve. It is not a commission to become greater, it is an invitation to become less. There is no mandate on you to save the world. There is a mission for you to love the world Jesus came to save.

The battle for people's lives will not be won in grandiose battles in the sky, with capes flying in the wind, with front-page

who's-stronger-than-who battles and egotistical showboating. The battle for people's lives will be won on the ground, loving and serving people, many times privately, in our homes, schools, places of work, on our city streets, and in our everyday lives.

The pressure to be a hero is off. The guilt of failing to be God is gone. The salvation of your family, your workplace, and your city is not all on you. Jesus is the one who saves lives, who heals marriages, who sets people free from addictions, and who makes the impossible, possible. Our power can't compare to His. We are neither the climax of the story nor the main point. Jesus is the subject, and we are the storytellers.

There is no mandate on you to save the world. There is a mission for you to love the world Jesus came to save.

This simple truth liberates me to take more risks without fearing failure. To share with people the wonderful news of what Jesus has done in my life without feeling the pressure of what those results will be. To be myself around coworkers, throw a dinner party and invite people that I might previously have been too embarrassed to invite, start a Bible study and not freak out about how many (or how few) people show up, share my story even if it isn't perfect yet, serve people who may not show gratitude, and share Jesus with people who may never accept him. I'm free to fumble. I'm free to risk. I'm freer than I've ever imagined.

Phew! What a load off. I was never a very good savior anyway.

THE HERO

There's a story in the Bible of a guy who also thought he had to rely on his own power. Nose in the air, confident of how well he knew the Scriptures, he asked Jesus what he needed to do to *earn* eternal life, hoping to trap Jesus. This well-educated man was fishing to find loopholes in Jesus' theology and form the ultimate pushback to the crazy notion that faith in Jesus was enough for salvation. Jesus responded by asking him what the Scriptures say, and the scholar knowledgeably replied, "Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor."

Jesus simply says to go and do exactly that.

I imagine the man looking at his friends and rolling his eyes as they chuckled, their feet dusted with warm sand filling their sandals and their hearts similarly dirty with pride. Trying to trap Jesus yet again, the man asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

What a bizarre thing to ask. If loving God and loving your neighbor was the way to grab hold of eternal life, why wouldn't he ask Jesus, "*How* can I love God, and *how* can I love my neighbor?" His clarification of *who* is my neighbor shows he was hoping to have an exclusive list. (Self-righteous people love those.) The man questioning Jesus wanted to know the boxes to check. He wanted to replace Jesus' saving grace with a to-do list. He wanted to earn. He wanted to achieve. Like many of us do when we rely on our power, he wanted to remove the spotlight from what Jesus could do and focus more on what humans could do. And then Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan.

We frequently use this term today to describe someone who does something kind. "That guy brought my Amazon order to my house when it was accidentally delivered to him in another neighborhood! What a Good Samaritan!" (A true story of what happened to me yesterday. Thanks, Casey S.! I needed that salsa!) And we've often heard

this story as if it's about bad guys (priests and Levites—religious people ignoring and passing by a beat-up and bleeding man on the side of the road) and good guys: the Samaritan who compassionately stopped, took pity on the hurting man, brought him to an inn to be taken care of, and told the innkeeper he'd pay for and provide whatever was necessary for the man's full recovery.

Jesus finished the story, looked to the self-righteous scholar, and asked, "Who loved their neighbor?" Jews hated Samaritans, so the scholar, refusing to name the helpful person in front of his attentive audience, and more irritated at Jesus than the pebbles in his sandals, quickly said, "The one who showed mercy."

Jesus then said, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37 RSV).

There are profound lessons to be found in the story of the good Samaritan for sure. More than we can unpack here. Things like we don't want to pass by those right in front of us who are hurting. We don't want to deter from those who are different from us. We don't want to ignore people's needs. Observing isn't enough. Posting online isn't enough. We need to take notice *and* take action.

That is all true, and that sermon will preach! But there's another lesson here: What happens when you can't physically stop for every single hurting person you see? What happens when you can't afford to cover the bills for everyone who needs financial help? What happens when the help and love the whole world needs is far outside our abilities?

There is good news. This is not a story about bad guys and good guys. It's a story about a *specific* guy.

Jesus.

Jesus is the Good Samaritan in the story.

We want to be like him, 100 percent. That's the goal. We want to "go and do likewise" and love every single fellow human. But don't

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miss this: the intent of Jesus telling this story was to make the point that we can't earn salvation through works. We can't find our identity through what we do. We can't rely on our own power. None of us can bandage up every hurting person we see in front of us, on TV, and online, and afford to pay for every single person's full medical bills until the day we die. If salvation was all based on works, none of us would make the cut.

We must put our faith in Jesus as the Savior. We must rely on His power. That's how we are saved. And that's how anyone can be saved. He's the only way people are getting healed from hurt, heartbreak, and sin. We are not the ultimate solution. Jesus is.

But Jesus said, "Go and do likewise." So what now? If we *can't* do everything the Good Samaritan did for every single person alive, what *can* we do?

Saint Augustine of Hippo, an esteemed fourth-century theologian and bishop who influenced the development of Western Christianity, suggested that we are the innkeepers in the story. Jesus brings people to us and tells us that whatever we need, He will provide. We are to be wise with His resources, the money He's blessed us with, and the talents he has given us, and use it all so we can serve, love, and partner with Him to restore the people He's placed right in front of us.² I love that. I'm convicted by that.

What if you and I took on this perspective?

- While at our inns, at our posts, in our homes, at our jobs, in our classrooms—are we using all we have been given to care for those Jesus has brought into our lives?
- At our churches—are we faithfully giving and serving?
- With our own families—are we being available and forgiving?
- To our coworkers—are we being inviting and encouraging?

- Are we using our time, our resources, and the things we are good at in order to love and serve those right beside us, right here, right now?

You and I might be tempted to be the ultimate rescuer in someone's story. But Jesus is the One with all the compassion and all of the resources. Jesus can heal things we can't. Jesus can redeem things we can't. Jesus is the hero of the story.

Jesus is the
hero of the
story.

Where do we go from here?

If we can't save the world, then what's our role? Are we not called to go into the world and tell the story of Jesus?

Absolutely. All of us are. That's what you will find in this book.

My prayer is that as you read you will discover how you actually can, in today's world, where you are, with what you have, show Jesus to those right next to you.

It's going to be fun. That's where we'll go. But that's not where we'll begin.

THE POWER WE NEED

Jesus came to this world (serving), lived in this world (showing us how to serve), and after He died and rose again, before He ascended from this world, He said, "*Here's the knowledge you need: you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be My witnesses, first here in Jerusalem, then beyond to Judea and Samaria, and finally to the farthest places on earth*" (Acts 1:8).

For years I read this verse and mistakenly put the emphasis on the

end of the verse, stacking insurmountable weight on my shoulders that I must *go* to places on earth far from where I am in order to effectively show God's love to anyone. Perhaps you have too. Some of us *are* called to go to places far from where we are. Certainly, if that's you, *do it*. I'm rooting you on. But that's not the sole point of Jesus' commission. It's also not the order. I used to get this so very wrong. The truth is that before we go, we first receive His power. In order, here's what Jesus was saying:

1. **We are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.** We cannot miss this first step. Those of us who have received Jesus into our lives have that same power that raised Him from the dead living inside of us (Rom. 8:10–11). *I know, right?* It's amazing. Many of us want to go into the world, but we skip being filled with His power. We want to go with our own strategies, our own preferences, and our own handpicked people and plans. That is often our first mistake. It is when we are filled with our own power and motives that we push people away, grow frustrated, and end up depleted. We want God's power, God's strength, God's wisdom, not ours.
2. **We find our identity in Jesus.** We're *His* messengers. We're neither along nor anonymous. We belong to Christ. We are identified with Him. We discover more of who we are when we sit in His presence, read His Word, love His Word, know Him, and talk to Him every day of our lives. Jesus' commission is not solely task-oriented, as many have come to interpret it. It's an invitation to be known and to belong.
3. **Filled and found, we go forth.** Once we are identified with Him and fueled by His power, we pass on the hope we've seen, relay the love we've experienced, and are the vocal eye-witness

accounts of what Jesus Christ can do in people's lives. In order of this scripture, we are filled and found, then we go forth to the people right next to us,¹ then to people a little farther, then to people not like us,² and then together our mission is to share the story of Jesus to everybody, everywhere.

Before we continue on this journey together, we must begin by being filled with His power and found in Him. Our big brother in the faith, Paul, reminded us that we can “no longer rely on ourselves and that we must trust solely in God, who possesses the power to raise the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9).

I want everyone to know Jesus for real. I want the people in my life to know how loved they are. I want to represent God's love well on social media, at Thanksgiving dinner with my family, and in line at Trader Joe's. But now I know: relying on my own power? That's how (not) to save the world. I need the power of God. And so do you. Before we go forth, let's first be found and filled. Let's come to God in an honest prayer.

Have you lived a life of striving? A life of guilt? Have you found your identity in the outcome of what you do?

Have you grown apathetic? Have you given up on your loved ones

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1. Jesus' listeners were standing on Jerusalem soil. People around them shared in their culture and likely their heritage and views of life. This was their starting point. This is also ours. Filled with the Spirit, and belonging to Jesus, tell His story and show what He is like to the people closest to you, in your home, in your college dorm room, in your yoga class.
 2. Judea was the greater area surrounding Jerusalem, and Samaria was the region next door. People in Judea would have had cultural similarities to the Jews hearing Jesus' words, even if they were geographically farther away. Samaria, which was physically closer to Jerusalem than the outskirts of Judea, had a far different culture. Samaritans had a completely different worldview. They had different hurts, different challenges, and different perspectives. This example should remind us that some of the people closest to us in proximity see the world profoundly differently and often these relationships will take more listening, intentionality, and consistency for us to understand their lens and effectively show them how loved they are.

far from God? Have you decided that your involvement in God's mission is not important?

I invite you to join me in surrendering the shame, the fears, and the pride that has held us back from living the lives He has called us to live. Your prayer could go something like this:

God, help me to see how I can partner with You on Your mission. I surrender my guilt, my pride, and any lie from the Enemy I've believed that has held me back from living as You've called me to live. I want to know the truth. As I read through the pages of this book, help me see the ways I can actually reveal Your love to the people right next to me. I want to be filled with Your power, found in who You are. And from that place, show me how I can go forth, amen.

Imagine a world where we all pray a prayer like this, where every Jesus-follower goes forth filled and fueled by God's power before anything else.

WHERE WE COME IN

It has been more than two decades since I sat frozen and fearful, watching lives stolen on the street right in front of me. With each following occurrence of violence, murder, and hate I have seen, my heart's sadness for the brokenness of the world has rapidly increased. There are days I still wrestle with relying on my own power. There have been times I have puffed up my chest, determined to be a long-awaited solution. There have been other times I've been so overwhelmed I let my mind spiral in thoughts of defeat. I wish I could somehow go back in

time and tell that nine-year-old girl debilitated with guilt: “You were not supposed to be the one to save everyone. Anytime you feel this way, for the rest of your life, I want you to remember: There is a Savior for this world. But you’re not it.”

You and I cannot save the world.

But make no mistake, Jesus’ mission for the saving of souls will absolutely require our participation. At our inn, among our peers, in our city, and throughout every nation, people will need to find out about the One who saves lives. We’ll have to tell the people we love about Him. We have to show His kindness and compassion to them so they will know what He’s like. People have to know about the freeing, hope-filled life that’s available to them in order to believe. They’ll have to believe to be saved (Rom 10:14–15).

First, they have to know. And that’s where we come in.

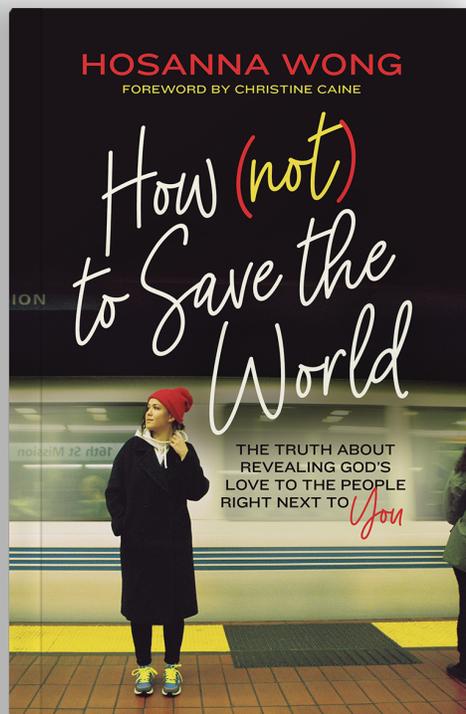
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