

We Believe and Are Sure

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The examples of those disciples who walked with Jesus during his mortal ministry can inspire our understanding of who he is and what he came to earth to do. They knew Jesus personally as a master and friend, but they also came to recognize him as the Son of God and Savior of the World. These first-century men and women illustrate that this knowledge comes incrementally, in a process seasoned with multiple stumbles and periods of blindness that nonetheless leads to an unshakeable testimony of the person and mission of Jesus Christ.

Because of the rich detail recorded about them in the New Testament, Peter the Galilean fisherman and Martha and Mary of Bethany provide particularly insightful evidence for the process of becoming trusted and effective disciples of Christ. Their testimonies of Jesus Christ came in stages: Their faith in him was initially incomplete, and their attempts to demonstrate devotion to him were at first ill conceived. Yet as they learned and practiced each saving truth that

Jesus taught and exemplified, their faith, testimony, and service became steadfast in that aspect of the gospel. Eventually, they became stalwart, inspired, and selfless disciples who courageously stood for truth and righteousness in all places and circumstances, providing us with models as we strive to come to better know and follow Jesus Christ.

Peter's Testimony of Who Jesus Is

While Jesus was with his disciples up north in Caesarea Philippi, he asked them who others thought he was. Apparently, neither Jesus nor others had made any clear or at least public announcements, claims, or general assumptions of his true identity at that time. People were circulating a variety of possibilities, including proposals that he was John the Baptist returned to life or one of the Old Testament prophets. Jesus then asked those present, "But whom say ye that I am?" In the Marcan account, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ" (Mark 8:29; parallel Luke 9:20). Matthew's account of the incident adds an important phrase to Peter's testimony: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). All three Synoptic accounts verify that Peter knew who Jesus was—the Anointed Servant of God—to which Matthew added the Son of God.

How did Peter gain his testimony? Scriptural evidence suggests that he and others first *believed* that Jesus was divinely sent and then acted upon that belief. For example, while still working in his fishing business in Galilee, Peter was engaged in the arduous task of cleaning his nets after a disappointing night of unsuccessful fishing. Jesus entered Peter's boat and asked Peter to row them back into the water so Jesus could teach them. Peter's respect for Jesus is evident from his obedience and reference to Jesus as "Master." But when he directed Peter to launch his newly cleaned nets back into the sea, Peter complained because he believed that further attempts to catch fish that day were futile. Even under a shadow of doubt, Peter acted on a belief in this Jesus, saying, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). When the nets broke from the weight of such a

huge catch of fish, Peter fell before Jesus's knees in reverence crying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (5:6–8).

Later in the Savior's ministry, after witnessing and participating in the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, the Twelve left Jesus on the shore and began to row back home in a boat. Caught in a storm that kept them battling the winds and waves during most of the night, they saw what appeared to be a spirit coming toward them on the water. Jesus immediately called out, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid" (Mark 6:49–50; parallel Matthew 14:26–27; John 6:19–20). To the shared account, Matthew adds the additional detail that Peter, believing but not knowing with certainty, responded, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water" (Matthew 14:28). Peter desired to know for certain who this Jesus was. Jesus told him, "Come." Acting on his desire to know, Peter climbed over the side of the boat and began walking toward Jesus but soon fell beneath the stormy seas when fear seized him. Jesus immediately pulled him out of the water and encouraged him to strengthen his faith: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (14:29–31). By acting on imperfect faith, with a desire to believe, Peter created a bigger space for his testimony to take root and expand.

In yet another instance that acting on belief is an important step in the process of gaining a testimony of who Jesus is, Peter was unafraid to ask Jesus for help in understanding his parables and other teachings. Even when Jesus prefaced his clarification of a teaching with a note of disappointment in Peter, "Are ye also yet without understanding?" in response to Peter's request, Peter was vigilant in his efforts to learn from Jesus and was courageous in his continued queries for help (Matthew 15:15–17).

After these and other sincere manifestations of willingness to act on a belief that Jesus was come from God, at Caesarea Philippi Peter could finally declare that Jesus was God's Chosen or Anointed One, declaring, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Once Peter had progressed in his testimony to know who Jesus was, Jesus then confirmed the truth by clarifying how Peter

had received this knowledge, declaring, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17). “Flesh and blood” at the time included the mortal Jesus; Jesus did not tell Peter this truth about his identity. Just as in our day, only through the Father-sent Spirit is divine truth revealed.

The Bread of Life sermon and the responses to it in John 6:26–71 provide another example of Peter proclaiming a firm testimony of who Jesus is, even when he and others did not yet fully understand what he had come to do.¹ In this discourse, Jesus proclaimed that he was the bread come down from heaven, symbolically answering the christological question of who he was. In the process he revealed how those who came to know this truth would be saved. “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (6:40). He also intimated what he had come to do, alluding to his salvific death when he declared, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (6:53–54). Only the day before, the multitude had benefited from the miracle of the loaves and the fishes and were eager to accept him as their king (6:15). Now, Jesus’s declaration that he must die contradicted the messianic expectations of not only the crowd but even many of his own disciples, who complained, “*This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*” (6:60; emphasis added). Because they could not properly understand who he was or what he had come to do, they could not accept his mission of sacrificing his “flesh and blood” to save them.

While Peter and the Twelve may not yet have fully understood that Christ had come to die, nevertheless their firm witness of who Jesus was gave them the faith to continue with him in the face of other doubt. When “many . . . went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66), Jesus asked the Twelve, “Will ye also go away?” (6:67). Peter’s response was simply, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. *And we believe and are sure that thou*

art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (6:68–69; emphasis added). Peter exemplified the power of remaining loyal to the truth that he had received, even when it wasn't complete. In a similar way, Peter's example can encourage our loyalty to what we know to be true when we are faced by "hard sayings," such as those messy questions and problems that often accompany policies, politics, history, and doubts.

Incomplete but Growing Testimonies

In spite of Peter's powerful spiritual witness of Jesus's identity, events immediately following his declaration at Caesarea Philippi show that he was still very much uncertain and confused about what Jesus came to do. His incomplete testimony needed to grow, moving him to a better appreciation for what Jesus had come to do. For instance, on at least three different occasions in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus foretold his apostles of his upcoming death at the hands of evil men and his subsequent rising from the grave. Beginning there at Caesarea Philippi, he prophesied, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31; parallels Matthew 16:21; Luke 9:22).² After the Transfiguration, he repeated the prophecy (Mark 9:31). Finally, a third time, as he accompanied the Twelve up to Jerusalem, he repeated "what things should happen unto him" (Mark 10:32–33). The responses of the Twelve collectively and of Peter specifically indicate that they did not yet understand that of necessity Jesus came to suffer, die, and rise again. Moments after bearing his Spirit-filled witness of Jesus as the Christ, Peter "rebuked" the very Son of God, declaring to him, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matthew 16:21–23; cf. Mark 8:31–33). After the second time that Jesus foretold of his suffering, death, and resurrection, the Twelve "understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him" (Mark 9:31–32). They perceived him as their master and king, but not yet as their great high priest and spiritual Savior.

The placement of these three predictions of his upcoming passion in Mark 8–10 falls between the story of him healing in stages a blind man in Bethsaida (Mark 8:22–26) and the story of him healing the blind Bartimaeus near Jericho (Mark 10:46–52) and underscores the uncertainty of the disciples’ knowledge. Because physical blindness easily serves as a metaphor for a lack of spiritual understanding, the way these two very different healing miracles frame the experiences of Peter and the Twelve encourages us to see them as part of a process toward greater knowledge and conversion. As their vision of Jesus sharpens and deepens in stages, so does ours in our own walk of discipleship.

In Bethsaida, after spitting on the blind man’s eyes and putting his hands on him, Jesus asked the man if he could see. The man answered, “I see men as trees, walking” (Mark 8:24). He was beginning to see, but not clearly; things were blurry and confusing, much like Peter’s testimony. So Jesus again put his hands on the man’s eyes and this time “he was restored, and saw every man clearly” (8:25). Certainly Jesus could have healed the blind man instantly and completely, so Jesus’s healing him in stages provides a model or pattern to how Peter, the other disciples, and we ourselves can receive spiritual understanding and a complete testimony of the Savior incrementally. In the incident at Caesarea Philippi immediately preceding this healing, Peter had come to know *who* Jesus was, but he did not yet understand, or accept, *what* he had come to do—suffer, die, and rise again for our salvation.

In Mark 8–10, between the two stories of blind men being healed and interwoven among the accounts of the three passion predictions, we also find reminders that Peter and the other apostles were unsure and lacking in understanding even after Peter had witnessed that Jesus is the Christ. Consider these episodes: On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter proposed making three tabernacles to honor Moses, Elias, and the transfigured Jesus because Peter “[knew] not what to say; for they were sore afraid” (Mark 9:5–6). There on the holy mountain, Jesus in glory told them again about his impending

resurrection after death. When they returned from the mountain, however, Peter, James, and John were still “questioning one with another what the rising from dead should mean” (9:9–10). Shortly afterward, the Twelve could not cast out an unclean spirit. Jesus responded to the situation: “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him to me” (9:14–29). And when some of the people brought young children to Jesus to bless them, his disciples rebuked the people because they thought the children were a nuisance and detracted from Jesus’s work. Peter and his associates were clearly confused by the Savior’s displeasure toward their inaccurate assumption and by his words in response: “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein” (Mark 10:13–16). Their spiritual blindness for what Jesus came to do was again apparent.³

After these instances, just outside of Jericho Jesus at last came to the blind man named Bartimaeus, who sat by the side of the road begging. When he heard Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he called out to him for mercy (Mark 10:46–48). His plea, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me,” highlights the man’s belief that Jesus was the promised messianic fulfillment that David’s seed would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:12–16). In response to the man’s sincere pleas, the scripture reads, “Jesus stood still” (Mark 10:49). He did not immediately reply to the blind man’s prayer. Instead, he asked others to call the man to come to him; Jesus required Bartimaeus to act on his belief even when he could not see. Then Bartimaeus, “casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus,” who asked him to repeat what he desired from him. “Lord, that I might receive my sight” (10:50–51). After Bartimaeus asked for help multiple times, when he could easily have felt that he was being ignored or rejected, the Savior asked him to come—to act—when none of his physical senses confirmed he had a reason to hope. In that moment of *acting* on a belief or hope, Jesus told him, “Thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way” (10:52).

Like the blind man healed in stages, Peter's testimony had expanded from belief to acknowledgment of who Jesus was and eventually to what he came to do. Bartimaeus's faith was similarly rewarded and strengthened as he acted on the incomplete faith he then possessed.⁴ In the process, Bartimaeus learned that the Lord is not merely a physical healer but a spiritual healer—his faith was made "whole." Nevertheless, while he still needed to act on his faith, his healing came more quickly, and Jesus restored his physical sight completely in an instant. Bartimaeus then left his "garment" or cloak behind when he came to Jesus. Understanding that Jesus Christ is the Atoning One, Bartimaeus's covering (from the Hebrew root *kpr* come the words *covering* and *atonement*) was made perfect in what the Savior came to do, but not through physical evidences of protection and cover. With this complete covering, Bartimaeus "followed Jesus in the way"; he authentically walked the gospel path of a disciple of Christ.

Martha's Testimony of the Resurrection and the Life

Martha of Bethany provides another example of this progressive conversion process. Four days after her brother Lazarus died and was buried in a tomb, Martha met Jesus as he came to visit and console her and her sister Mary. Martha's words reflect her knowledge of the Savior's healing power: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." To which Jesus declared to her, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha's next statement of knowledge indicates that she also knew, at least in part, the doctrine of resurrection: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:21–24).

Martha's understanding of and belief in the resurrection, together with her active dialoging with Jesus on spiritual matters, contrast markedly with Luke's depiction of her in her home near Jerusalem, where, while serving Jesus, she became "cumbered about

much serving" (Luke 10:39–40). In that setting, Martha complained to Jesus that he didn't care about her. She was focused on what *she* was doing to help others and was ignorant of how her sister served or her profound need for the Savior's sacrifice. Certainly, she had the beginning of a testimony. Her belief and respect for Jesus were evident in the care and effort she made to host him in her home. Like Peter and his associates, however, she did not understand or appreciate the purpose for his coming. The Lord's poignant response to her incomplete testimony provides a hint of where she was spiritually blind: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful" (10:41–42). His correction prompted in her a much stronger witness and commitment to selflessly serve. According to John, days before the crucifixion, Martha served a meal to her brother Lazarus, her sister Mary, Jesus, and other disciples. The setting is almost identical to the Luke incident, but Martha herself had changed. She still served, but this time in ways that focused the attention on Jesus and his imminent sacrifice (John 12:1–9).⁵

In John's account, the words of the Lord deepened Martha's belief after watching her brother die, leading Jesus to respond by teaching her more truth: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" To this Martha responded as steadfastly as did Peter after the Bread of Life discourse: "Yea, Lord: *I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*" (John 11:25–27; emphasis added). Her firm response contrasts with the response of her sister, Mary, who also patiently nurtured an incomplete conversion to the Savior. She initially declared the same faith in his healing powers after Lazarus's death as did her sister: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (11:32). Yet whereas Mary had sat, eagerly listening, at the feet of Jesus in Luke, in John's story she is overwhelmed with grief, leading Jesus to groan with compassion and weep as well (11:33–34).

Both sisters revered his power as healer, teacher, and master, but experiencing profound grief at the loss and burial of their brother

may have ignited Mary's and Martha's faith and anticipation for what Jesus came to do eternally when he raised Lazarus from the dead. As witnesses of their brother's return to life after he had been dead four days, the sisters learned a deeper meaning in the Savior's words "I am the resurrection and the life." Mary in particular, with her grief over Lazarus changed to joy at his restoration to life, is then presented as one of very few disciples whose testimony expanded to embrace knowledge *before* he went to Calvary that his mission included dying for us all.

Arriving at a Complete and Sure Witness

The Gospels present Mary of Bethany and another woman as coming to an understanding that Jesus would soon die, even before the male disciples gained that knowledge. Six days before Jesus's crucifixion, Mary, the sister of Martha, anointed Jesus's feet with an expensive ointment while Judas Iscariot rebuked her for such extravagance. Jesus defended Mary's generosity. "Let her alone," he said, "against the day of my burying hath she kept this," or as is found in the Joseph Smith New Translation: "For she hath preserved this ointment until now, that she might anoint me in token of my burial" (John 12:3–7). On a similar occasion a few days later, an unnamed woman in Bethany brought "an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious" to anoint the Savior's head. Again, there were those who protested the "waste" of the expensive oil. Once more, Jesus defended the woman's gift. "Why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. . . . She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying" (Mark 14:3–9; parallel Matthew 26:6–12).

Although connected to the burial customs of the day, the act of anointing had powerful precedents in Jewish history. From the beginning of the kingdom of Israel, prophets had anointed Saul, then David, and then Solomon to serve as God's chosen sovereign for his people (1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13; 2 Samuel 5:3; 1 Kings 1:39). Thereafter, the rightful king of Judah and the kings of Israel were ritually anointed with

oil to designate those chosen to rule. Beginning with Aaron, priests were anointed with oil to commemorate their authority to minister (Exodus 40:13–15). At least in some instances, leading prophets, too, were anointed for their upcoming responsibility (1 Kings 19:16; Isaiah 61:1; Psalm 105:15).⁶ This practice of anointing prophets, priests, and kings is a type of anointing the “King of kings” (1 Timothy 6:15), the “High Priest of good things to come” (Hebrews 9:11), and the awaited Prophet foretold by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15–19; Acts 3:22). The titles “Messiah” (Hebrew, *māšīaḥ*) and “Christ” (Greek, *christos*) both mean “the Anointed One.” The anointing or anointings that Jesus received before his passion, while explicitly performed in preparation for his death and burial, might also have been implicit testimonies that Mary and the unnamed woman knew that Jesus was, in fact, the Anointed One.⁷

Other women from Galilee had followed and ministered to Jesus of their substance since he made them whole in both body and spirit (Luke 8:1–3).⁸ These were in Jerusalem at the time that Jesus died, having followed him there from Galilee. While some of them may not have had the exact insight that Mary of Bethany and the unnamed woman who anointed him had, their faith and love were enough to lead them to the horrible crucifixion, where the Synoptics portray them watching the scene somewhat from a distance (Mark 15:40–41; parallels Matthew 27:55–56; Luke 23:49), and John shows at least some of them “[standing] by the cross of Jesus” (John 19:25). Although these women did not yet know that Jesus would of a certainty rise from the grave, by their actions they witnessed that he had indeed come to die. And they stood by him in his agony.

When Jesus was dead and taken to a sepulchre to be buried, these same women “followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day” (Luke 23:55–56; cf. Mark 15:47). Some of these same women, coming to the tomb to anoint the body—which they were not allowed to do since the body was removed from the cross—were the first to discover that the tomb was empty and hear

the witnesses of angels that the Lord had risen (Mark 16:1–5; parallels Matthew 28:1–8; Luke 24:1–11). According to John, Mary Magdalene, one of the women from Galilee who had also stood at the foot of the cross, became the first person to see the resurrected Christ (John 20:11–18). By following Jesus, despite hardship, grief, or distance, these women began to embrace the reality that the Messiah came to lose his life that we may live. When their devotion led them to prepare him more completely for his burial, they received further witnesses and soon gained testimonies that he also conquered death for us.⁹

Peter and the Beloved Disciple received a similar clarification and deepening of testimony after the resurrection. When they ran to see the empty tomb for themselves in response to the women’s declaration, the two apostles were surprised, “for as yet they knew not” or, perhaps better said, they had not yet understood (Greek, *ēdeisan*) “the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead” (John 20:3–10). Their continued misunderstanding quickly dissipated after Jesus finally appeared to *them* after his death and invited *them* to touch the prints in his hands, side, and feet (20:19–29; cf. Luke 24:36–43). As the first fruits of the resurrection, he “opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,” which prophesy, “Thus it [is necessary for] Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:44–47). Finally, they began to grasp what he, the Messiah and the Son of God, had come to earth to do.

After the resurrection, the disciples’ testimonies grew dramatically, empowered by the receipt of the gift of the Spirit. The testimony of Peter and his fellow apostles is recorded multiple times in the first eight chapters of Acts.¹⁰ Their fearless defense of the mission of Jesus Christ underscores their expanding understanding that he who died lives again to grant us the gift of salvation. For example, the high priest–led Sanhedrin in Jerusalem commanded the apostles to cease teaching in Jesus’s name but quickly arrested them anew when they found the apostles openly testifying of Christ at the temple

(Acts 5:17–28). In response to the council’s threats and warnings, the apostles unflinchingly responded, “We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:29–32).

In the years following the Lord’s postresurrection ministry to the New Testament disciples, other believers in addition to the apostles lived Christ-centered lives to courageously spread the gospel. Men and women of faith were among those that persecutors threatened, arrested, and even slayed in their attempts to halt the spread of power in the name of Jesus Christ (see Acts 9:1–2).

“That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”

The New Testament thus provides us powerful examples of how true conversion is wrought. The authors of the four Gospels believed in Jesus Christ and recorded the words and deeds of Jesus so that countless others could learn truths about him (see Luke 1:1–4). Specifically, John wrote his testimony of the gospel so that “[we the readers] might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31). For John, it wasn’t enough to know who Jesus is. He wanted us to also know that Jesus came to give us life, and to “have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Witnesses of Jesus Christ in the New Testament such as Peter, Martha, and Mary began their journey to full conversion with an imperfect understanding and limited vision of what Jesus came to earth to do. Incremental learning over time while putting into practice what we learn is often the pattern that we follow to achieve a firm reverence and appreciation for our dependence on him. Like them, we often find ourselves faced by “hard sayings” and circumstances that

seem incongruent with our perspective of God's purposes. We may easily relate to those disciples who "walked no more after [Jesus]," being offended by his words. Like Martha, we may think that Jesus no longer cares about us when we are so often overburdened, overwhelmed, and underappreciated. That is why it is tempting to give up and renounce the witness of God's truth we have already received. The world is ready to support our despair as it carefully and sophisticatedly articulates reasons to abandon what we know because of what we don't know.

As we seek to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32), we must come to better know what it means that he is the Son of God and the Savior of the World. This knowledge is rarely perfect or certain in our early walk of discipleship. Nevertheless, the examples of Peter, Martha, Mary, and the women from Galilee show us how we can push forward from hope to belief to more sure knowledge. These New Testament witnesses call us to similarly come to know Jesus and what he has done for us. If we will stay steadfast in the gospel knowledge that we know from experience to be true and refuse to be offended by what we do not understand, we can and will proceed through incremental and often imperfect jumps and starts to finally see what only Christ can show us and become what only he can make of us. That full conversion embraces the gospel of repentance, forgiveness, and everlasting life made possible only through the mercy, merits, grace, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We then can stand with Martha and Peter of old, as witnesses at all times and places, to declare "We believe and are sure." This is the promise and enabling power Jesus Christ came to earth to offer.

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Notes

1. See Eric D. Huntsman, “The Bread of Life Sermon,” in *Celebrating Easter*, ed. Thomas A. Wayment and Keith J. Wilson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2006), 87–111.
2. For a discussion on why Mark’s Gospel is a particularly meaningful source for understanding Peter, see Eric D. Huntsman, “The Petrine *Kērygma* and the Gospel according to Mark,” in *The Ministry of Peter the Chief Apostle* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 169–77.
3. For additional scriptural evidence of Peter’s incomplete testimony, see Jared W. Ludlow, “Stand Down and See the End,” in *Ministry of Peter the Chief Apostle*, 67–90; and Brent L. Top, “Fallible but Faithful,” in *Ministry of Peter the Chief Apostle*, 1–12.
4. Eric D. Huntsman sees Bartimaeus as having a “full understanding” of who Jesus is and why he had come from the beginning of his story as contrasted to the blind man healed in stages. Huntsman, *Miracles of Jesus* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 103. For a lovely discussion on how healing physical blindness can symbolize the Savior’s power to heal spiritual blindness, see pages 87–103.
5. For an in-depth analysis of Martha’s transformation as a disciple, see Camille Fronk Olson, *Mary, Martha, and Me: Seeking the One Needful Thing* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 155–64.
6. See Eric D. Huntsman, *God So Loved the World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 44–45, 133–35.
7. See Camille Fronk Olson, “Mary and Martha,” in *Women of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 163–64.
8. See also stories of other Galilean women whose lives were touched and forever changed through their interactions with Jesus, which Luke relates in the same context in Luke 7–8—that is, the woman who loved much, the widow of Nain, the woman who touched the hem of the Savior’s robe, the daughter of Jairus and her mother, and Mary the mother of Jesus. These women may also have been among those Galilean women who

followed Jesus to the cross and the tomb; see “Women of Galilee,” in Olson, *Women of the New Testament*, 177–213.

9. See Camille Fronk Olson, “They Ministered unto Him of Their Substance: Women and the Savior,” in *To Save the Lost: An Easter Celebration*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2009), 61–80.
10. For a fuller discussion of what Peter’s testimony grew to become, see Terry B. Ball, “‘Whom Say Ye That I Am?’: Peter’s Witness of Christ,” in *Ministry of Peter the Chief Apostle*, 13–26.