



Unbind Me | Lauren Wright Pittman

*Poem on Wilderness*  
THE WILDERNESS IS A PLACE OF  
NEW LIFE—RESILIENT LIFE

I used to think the wilderness  
would never end.

I called my mom and asked –  
“Does time really heal all  
wounds?”

Do the pieces ever fall back into  
place?

Does the wilderness go on  
forever?”

So she told me about the horizon.  
She said, “There is an edge,  
Where the earth meets the sky.  
And when you’re there,  
You will see daisies in the  
sidewalk  
And the sun after the rain.”

I asked her to draw me a map  
And she cried,  
Because she knew this road was  
mine to walk,  
But she promised to wait for me,  
Day in and day out,  
For as long as the wilderness  
raged.

So I walked.  
And it felt like forty days and it  
hurt like forty nights.  
And I waved to the people I  
passed there in the wilderness.

We tipped our hats to one  
another,  
Silently recognizing the weight we  
each carried,  
Until one day, I realized –  
The earth always kisses the sky.  
And this wilderness has turned  
into a garden,  
And I have made it out alive.

And my mother hugged me,  
There at the earth’s edge.  
And she whispered in my ear,  
That God was that gardener,  
And that I had nothing to fear.

So if you ever ask for a map,  
Know that God and I will be  
planting seeds,  
Hoping to turn your wilderness  
into a garden.

For as long as the wilderness rages  
on,  
I will never stop looking for you  
Where the earth kisses the sky.

*Prayer by Sarah Are*



READ JOHN 11:1-45

FROM THE ARTIST | LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

Jesus' humanity is apparent in this narrative. Here is a greatly disturbed man convincing himself of God's providence as He bears guilt and grieves the loss of His close friend: "I thank You for having heard me. I knew You always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here so that they may believe that You sent me" (John 11:42). *Or so that I may believe*, I imagine Jesus thinking.

I imaged Jesus in sorrowful hues, tearfully imploring His friend to come out, while the crowd bears down on His shoulders. Perhaps things got too real. Did He feel the creeping chills of His own fate while standing at the mouth of the tomb? Did He feel responsible?

Jesus seems bound by the weight of His divinity and the demands of His ministry. "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone You" (John 11:8). "Lord if You had been there, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21, 32). "Could not this man who opened the blind man's eyes, have done something to keep Lazarus from dying?" (John 11:37). I wonder if as Jesus exclaims, 'Unbind him, and let him go,' He thinks to Himself, "Who will unbind me?"

No matter our vocation, we can find comfort that even Jesus felt overwhelmed by the gravity of His call. When we stumble under this great weight, God strains and weeps with us, but also longs for us to be set free from the pressure. God accompanies us with open hands, ready to unbind us as we learn to lean in confidence on God's provision. We've got to be unbound in order to release others from that which keeps us in spiritual death – that which obscures and steals abundant life.

## PRAYER

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image on the front of this booklet. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How do you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent or spoken prayer to God.