SAINTS AND SCOUNDRELS IN THE STORY OF JESUS

WHEATON, Ill.—The story of Jesus includes all kinds of characters. Some see these characters as mere examples to follow or avoid, and some have only heard about them in Sunday school stories. But their interactions with Jesus reveal much more about the person of Jesus himself and the message he has for us.

In her latest book, Saints and Scoundrels in the Story of Jesus (Crossway, April 2020), Nancy Guthrie tells the story of ten people or groups of people who are integral to the story of Jesus told in the Gospels. Each chapter takes a Bible character and reveals them as a three-dimensional person with desires, motivations, flaws, and limitations, and explores a central truth about who Christ is, what he accomplished, and what it means to be joined to him by faith.

“I hope to add to, deepen, refine, or perhaps correct your grasp of the various characters I feature in the following chapters,” writes Guthrie. “I hope to show them to you from an angle you may not have seen them before or through a more intense lens than you may have examined them before. I hope you’ll come to see these characters in a fuller dimension in terms of their human frailty and limitations as well as their confidence and courage. I hope to show you some of the things that may have shaped their expectations, motivations, and misunderstandings. I hope you’ll see yourself in them, at times. But mostly I want to help you to see Jesus more clearly through delving into these stories and these people.”

Some of the characters profiled include John the Baptist, Herod, Mary, Joseph, Peter, Caiaphas, Barabbas, Stephen, and Paul. Whether saints or scoundrels, these figures are more than examples—each one shows a unique angle on the grace available through Jesus for sinners.

“It was my own curiosity about some of these characters, my own questions about why they did the things they did and said the things they said, and for some of them, died the way they died, that made me want to explore their stories,” writes Guthrie. “Again and again, I’ve seen myself in them—my fears, my failures, and my desires. But more importantly, they’ve helped me to love and admire Christ more, to become more convinced of his goodness, and to live more fully anticipating all he has promised to share with those who take hold of him by faith. I’m praying that the study of these characters will do the same for you—that these saints and scoundrels will point you clearly and convincingly to the only hope for saints and scoundrels—Jesus Christ.”

Questions for group discussion are included at the end of the book.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nancy Guthrie teaches the Bible to women at her church, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Tennessee, and at conferences worldwide. She and her husband, David, are the cohosts of the GriefShare video series used in more than 10,000 churches nationwide and also host Respite Retreats for couples who have experienced the death of a child. Guthrie is also the host of Help Me Teach the Bible, a podcast of the Gospel Coalition.

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