



Introduction

Lent is a season of the Christian year when people are invited and encouraged to turn their focus on their relationship with God in Christ.

I am a forty-something man. I live a very full and busy life. I pay my bills . . . most of the time. I live in a suburban neighborhood and serve in a place with a lot of people who look just like me. It is a life of GO GO GO . . . all of the time. I have a wife, a daughter, and a “designer dog” that doesn’t shed. We drive a Subaru Outback. Subaru’s slogan is: “Love. It’s what makes a Subaru.”

Wow.

All of this got me thinking. What is love . . . really? Of course it is the love I have for God, my family, my friends . . . and okay, our Subaru. Yet . . . as a person of faith, do I really understand love: the bloody, passionate, inspiring, pierced, and challenging face of love? As a forty-something, moving way too quickly through life, do I really know Jesus—the face and heart of love?

Over those past few years, I entered Lent with the fanaticism of someone on a mission—a mission of life and death. I wanted to *know* Jesus in a new way. I wanted to touch his life . . . and walk through his death—and resurrection. I knew that I would glimpse bits and pieces of the story through beautiful liturgies and inspiring Lenten speakers, but I needed more. I needed to be alone with Jesus, and we needed to get to know each other better.

So I began to draw . . . and paint, inspired by different Lenten readings, themes, or stories. I wanted to walk with Jesus—as a friend and disciple. I created a different image each day. These were quick, inspired,





and sometimes frantic. I felt at times like a courtroom sketch artist . . . a journalist with paints.

One of my favorite readings—and inspiration for the title of this book—came from John 1:48. Nathanael says to Jesus, “How do you know me?” Jesus replies, with a twinkle in his eye, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree . . .” I have a special affinity for Nathanael. He understood the importance of making time for prayer. For Jesus to know him and call him by name was profound. Nathanael was, or so he thought, out of sight—hidden. Yet the one that he longed to meet face-to-face not only called Nathanael by name, he also knew Nathanael’s heart.

He knows your heart.

Jesus saw Nathanael under the fig tree. I, too, was there. The large green leaves sheltered Nathanael. The ripe fruit-like ornaments hung from the branches. And Jesus saw Nathanael.

I want to be Nathanael.

I think we all want Jesus to see us . . . to call us. And this is where the sparkle in Jesus’ eye comes in. He does see us. He does call us. We just need to look up from our computers, our cell phones, our tablets . . . and look out . . . not up. We must look out—into the eyes of Jesus—into the face of Jesus.

How might we gather as a family at the end of the day to read a reflection and explore the meaning of an image? Through conversation and study, I hope this book can be a rich addition to your experience of Lent and will enable you and your family to come to know Jesus’ love in a unique and inspiring way.

This book of images and reflections was created with the hope of inspiring others—to slow down. To reflect on what love really means. To sit with Jesus under the fig tree and talk . . . and listen . . . and love.

These are my love letters to Jesus.

Roger Hutchison
Houston, Texas
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