

# This Place is Saved

By Josh Smith

This Place is Saved.

Have you ever been in a room full of people and still felt completely alone? Maybe you know everyone in the room, and yet still you feel unknown or alone.

Or perhaps you just walked into a room full of strangers, you don't know a single person in the room.

**But** what about that time when you attended an event or a service knowing someone had arrived before you and saved a space for you?

Scripture paints a picture for us of having this type of BELONGING in heaven.

## **John 14:2-3**

"In My Father's house are many rooms; if *that* were not so, I would have told you, because I am going *there* to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, *there* you also will be."

(Opening Prayer)

As children of Yahweh this space of belonging is something we long for, and rightly so.

## Philippians 3:20 NLT

"But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are **eagerly** waiting for him to return as our Savior."

What would it look like to experience that sense of BELONGING here and now in our world today.

Q. What if we, working in partnership with the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy spirit), could bring a whole lot of belonging here to our own life and to the lives of those around us?

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Josh Smith.

- Growing up in the church, I've served in various ministry positions: youth programs, music ministries, adult classes, camp leadership, etc. Currently I'm leading a team within a regional trades company and have 17 direct reports. I have had many successes and many failures on the road to those successes.
- I've also experienced five significant and traumatic personal losses
  - The loss of two children -one a miscarriage at 11 weeks and -one an accident at 12 yrs old.
  - The loss of my mother through suicide
  - The loss of an 18 year old mentee in a swimming incident after 6 years of meeting weekly and watching him grow.
  - The loss of my marriage
  - The loss of my community as I moved to an isolated part of the country.

These failures, successes, and losses, were interwoven with severe depression, grief, and even mental breakdown. But God was not done with me. And after the dark came the morning. A time learning to live again and differently.

By differently, I mean things have re-shaped my understanding of God, myself, our enemy, other people, leadership, and faith.

These experiences could not help but do so.

Bob Lynn Worldview Circle graph

- TRUTH
- Perspective
- Beliefs
- Values
- Behavior

### **3 types of revelation ( TRUTH revealed to mankind)**

- NATURAL REVELATION—-Gods self disclosure through creation
- SPECIAL REVELATION—--Gods specific communication through events like the incarnation & Divine Scripture
- SPIRITUAL REVELATION—-- The spirit illuminates the understanding of God's truth leading to personal transformation

We as believers have the benefit of all three

Something fun!

Here are some things from a random "Top Ten" list of things that people from the US do not know about Canadians!

- "Our houses don't melt in summer, and we do use electricity."
- "We say sorry as a way of being polite or diffuse tense situations, not really because we are actually sorry."
- "We use toboggans, not sleds, and wear toques, not hats, in the winter."
- "'Yeah, no.' 'No, yeah.' 'Yeah, no, for sure.' Learn the difference or you might find yourself very, very confused."

Through these experiences—successes and heartbreaks—There is a TRUTH that keeps resurfacing:

**Human stability is directly correlated to the amount of belonging humans experience.**

This is an absolute.

Though a human can forgo belonging for some time, each person must eventually have space in which they do belong. If they do not get it, then there will come a pivotal moment in which the soul says, "I'm done." When that happens, some go looking and some give up. We see this all around us: the teenager becoming an adult, the employee needing purpose, the spouse hungry to be known, the homeless wandering the street—each trying to force, gain, ask, beg, plead, or borrow space of belonging to get their own footing in the world.

Theologian and author Henri Nouwen speaks about this. He calls it hospitality: "Hospitality means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy... Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place." — Henri Nouwen, "Reaching Out"

It is not about entertaining or impressing, but about creating an empty space where others can feel free to be themselves.

## Practical Tools / Framework

Allowing others to be in our presence without fear of judgment, coercion, or agenda.

### **What "Holding Space" Is Not:**

- Giving up healthy personal boundaries
- Condoning inappropriate behavior
- Forfeiting truth or moral conviction
- The approval of things we disagree with

SO, what is “Holding Space”?

### **It is:**

- A. Believing inside yourself that it is okay for the other person to be what they are in this moment right now
- B. Holding a deep acknowledgment that they are dynamic and may change (God is not yet done with them)
- C. Acting on those two beliefs

What does “Holding Space” look like? What is it in practice

Others might experience it as being in our presence without fear of judgment, coercion, or agenda.

- Allow them to fill the space instead of us. How do we do that?
  - Filling of the 5 senses
    - Sight, touch, taste, sound, smell

- The other person talking
  - What does that mean we are doing?
    - LISTEN
    - SILENT
  - Last week Karis spoke to the value of practicing curiosity.
- How in this setting would we practice curiosity?
    - By **Actively** Listening.
    - Ask questions, (so they are encouraged to be in the SPACE.)
  - SILENT LISTENING & ACTIVE CURIOSITY

### **Lets practice**

#### EXERCISE

(Pick someone)

**How are you?**

(Level 1 is just a one word answer)

**What is your opinion about whether it is better to live in the US or in Canada?**

Jesus does this for us.

Does Jesus want a quick “Good morning Jesus, I hope you're having a great day, see you tonight!”

Jesus Holds Space for us, and he wants us in that space.

Luke 24:13–31 – The Road to Emmaus this passage opens with two of Jesus disciples walking on the road to emeus (It opens with two of his disciples already on the road)

14And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. 15While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. 16But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. 17And He said to them, “What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?” And they stood still, looking sad. 18One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, “Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?” 19And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, 20and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. 21But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. 22But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, 23and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. 24Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.” 25And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” 27Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

28And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. 29But they urged Him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So He went in to stay with them. 30When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

Jesus walks with two confused, grieving disciples. He doesn't correct them immediately. He listens. He asks questions. He lets them feel their feelings. He doesn't rush in with arms waving and words poised to say here “**I am here guys, I am alive, I am good, all is well. I did it!**”

No need for me to know you, it's just you who needs to know about my greatness. No, it's only later that He reveals who He is. He holds space first.

How much easier was it for them to hear the truth he proceeded to share after He gave them space in his heart and his mind.

How much easier would it be for me or you to hear after first being heard?

Just imagine you stop at your local auto store, or grocery store. One you have never been to. At the counter the clerk looks at what you have on the counter and looks over at you, pauses with a critical eye on you and then says “I'm sorry but this really is not something you want. You should just put it back because it is not a fit for you.”



Jesus did the opposite for his disciples on the road he asked “What are you talking about” and he asked “what things”

Q. Are we starting to see the space that God/Jesus is constantly holding for us?

### **Jeremiah 31:3**

Long ago the LORD said to Israel:

“I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love.

With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.”

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

29Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light.”

How can we enter the space God has saved for us?

God invites us to take space HE has for us. How do we do that?

- Salvation acceptance of Christ
- Talking with God,
- Reading his word
- Accepting God’s grace for us in our failures
- Being patient with ourselves as He is patient with us
- Remembering that we are a work in progress, not an overnight sensation
- Trusting Him that He will complete the work in us He has begun

## **Jude 1:24**

“24 Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault.”

### **Challenges to Holding Space.**

The moment that does not feel good to be around someone, they talk too much, they don't talk enough, they don't smell quite nice.

Someone challenges my assumptions or actions. The moment in a relationship when I am feeling hurt or taxed.

A know-it all.

When tired? I am far more interested in my needs at that moment than in another's?

Busy-ness

Feeling like a failure

There are many potential road blocks that would keep us from “holding space”

Q. Can we, in partnership with God, bring a whole lot of joyful belonging here to our own life and to the lives of those around us?

Yes, By entering the “Space” he has saved for us, and by saving “Space” for others we and others experience today a place of true belonging.

### **Final Questions:**

- Are you willing to make room for others, just as God does for you?
- Are you willing to practice that silent but active curiosity?
- Who needs you to hold space for them this week?
- Who in your life is aching to be seen, not fixed?

[Final prayer]