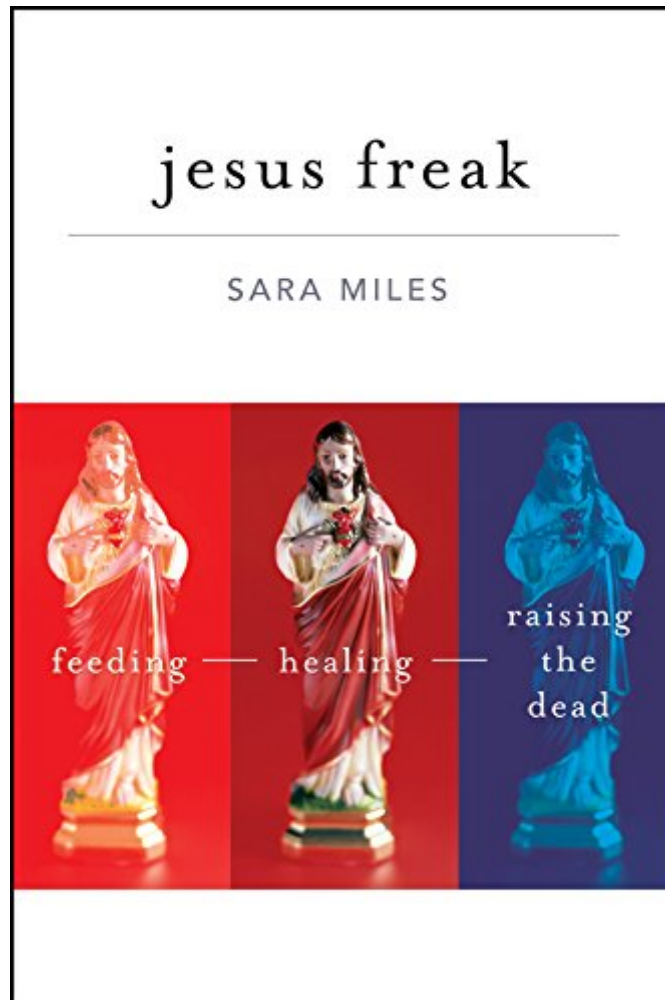




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Jesus Freak: Feeding Healing Raising The Dead



Synopsis

"I came late to Christianity," writes Sara Miles, "knocked upside down by a mid-life conversion centered around eating a literal chunk of bread. I hadn't decided to profess an article of doctrine, but discovered a force blowing uncontrollably through the world." In this new book, Sara Miles tells what happened when she decided to follow the flesh and blood Jesus by doing something real. For everyone afraid to feed hungry strangers, love the unlovable, or go to dark places to bless and heal, she offers hope. She holds out the promise of a God who gave a bunch of housewives and fishermen authority to forgive sins and raise the dead, and who continues to call us to action. And she tells, in vivid, heartbreakingly honest stories, how the ordinary people around her are transformed by taking up God's work in the world. Sara Miles offers a fresh, fully embodied faith that sweeps away the anxious formulas of religion to reveal the scandalous power of eating with sinners, embracing the unclean, and loving the wrong people. Jesus Freak: Feeding Healing Raising the Dead is her inspiring book for undomesticated Christians who still believe, as she writes, "that Jesus has given us the power to be Jesus."

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Customer Reviews

The Rev. Sara Miles, the Minister and Director of the Food Pantry of St. Gregory of Nyssa in Los Angeles, writes about her work with residents, rich and poor in LA. Ms. Miles, her co-workers and volunteers take the local (and some not so local) misfits and turn them into workers and volunteers. She takes adults and groups of children brought up in luxury and privilege and places them side by side with the children and adults from the "other side of the tracks", teaching them the meaning of charity, love and a sense of "people." The meaning of when Christ says, "Whatever you did for the least of My brothers and sisters, you did for Me." She shows us that faith without following actions cannot work. They are two sides of the same coin. You can't have one without the other. She not only talks the talk, but walks the walk. Her story makes you want to be there with her and Jesus, gathering the food, cooking the meals, empathizing with the lonely, healing the sick in mind and body and feeding those who may not have the wherewithal to feed themselves and their families. It will open your eyes as they, too, struggle to provide, never losing faith, ever comforting, ever struggling to make a better world for those around them. She smacks away our smug attitude about the "laziness and stupidity of the poor." It gives us hope for a kinder world and that, yes, we can all be followers of Christ. Wherever we are, whatever we do. I give this book five stars, not only for the message the book sends, but by the way Ms. Miles writes—drawing you ever into the church and its Christ-like teachings, ever so gently encouraging the reader that this may be the way we all can live. Sara Miles was a former cook and war correspondent before she became a minister and founded the Food Pantry of St. Gregory. She also wrote "Faith in the Streets" and "Take this Bread: A Radical Conversion." Patricia A. Guthrie *Waterlilies Over my Grave* 2008 *In the Arms of the Enemy* 2007

When Jesus separates the sheep from the goats on the basis of who feeds the poor, clothes those in need and generally gives of themselves for the economically disadvantaged, we must assume that Sara Miles will be with the former. Her heart for feeding the hungry as it plays out at St. Gregory's in San Francisco every Friday is evident and the inspiring story of the blessings and tribulations of carrying out this ministry are heartwarming and amusing. A must read for those who care about those Jesus cared about.

I loved this one more than *Take This Bread*. Her renderings of the parables and gospel stories break open meanings that are completely new for me, unconsidered, despite my thinking I knew

about them already. I especially loved her comment that the story of Jesus and the woman seeking healing for her daughter reveals a healing, but it is in Jesus himself, as he comes to recognize his own racism toward the woman and is impressed by her faith. Sara Miles' life has been completely changed by her encounter with Jesus, and it is wondrous to read what she shares about that journey.

JESUS FREAK is about Miles' evolution in her practice of "radical Christianity--" i.e. What living life as Jesus instructed his followers ACTUALLY to do it-- feeding the poor and healing the sick. She herself seems to have grown in her own Christian life-- less self-righteous and judgemental; more compassionate and tolerant. This book makes a practicing Christian reevaluate his or her own efforts to live a Christ-centered life. This book is not for the ultra-conservative or the close-minded, but for those who are seeking to take literally "love thy neighbor as thyself," it is a breath of fresh air.

I do not usually like pop-religion books, and avoid the "inspirational", too. Despite its off-putting main title for people like me, I found this book to be thoughtful and well-written, perfect for the socially-conscious and questioning Christian who isn't looking for validation of what s/he already believes or for pat answers. The book is full of thoughtful and surprising insights from the author's experiences; her delineation of the difference between healing and curing, for instance, was not just a stroke of brilliance, but inspired, inspiring, and generative. I have read the book more than once, something I almost never do, have recommended it to others, and led study based on it. Incredible.

Sara Miles' Jesus Freak: Feeding, Healing, Raising the Dead is a breathtaking ride, an excellent sequel to her Take This Bread. For those of us who might identify ourselves as Christians on the Left of the spectrum, Sara is a vital antidote to the image of Christians on the right. Sara takes the best lessons from scripture about the love of God and the radical nature of Jesus' presence to those most disenfranchised and does her best to live them out with radical courage and a sense of humor. She's smart, queer, and funny, and I laughed and wept through both Take This Bread and Jesus Freak. She instinctively knows how to integrate the sacramental with the incarnational, and offers a vision for some of us of what Church could be at its best.

This little book, detailing the author's journey to belief and then to a life of service to those who are hungry and often homeless is truly inspiring. You do not have to be religious to be inspired to step up and to reach out to those less fortunate. Working in a food pantry is just one way. In the case of the

food pantry at St. Gregory's of Nissa, which Sara Miles started, they have just celebrated their 11th year of successfully feeding thousands. The author writes in a very engaging way and brings each experience to life. I can recommend another book which is a more detailed autobiography of her life and work titled "With This Bread"

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