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Unhiding vulnerable voices: Reading four parables in Luke as a response to gender-based violence in South Africa

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This article proposes an unhiding reading of the parables of Jesus, revealing the often-overlooked presence and agency of women in these narratives. Grounded in social-scientific and historical criticism, this methodology explores how first-century listeners would have imagined women as active participants in daily life, present in households, fields, roads and acts of hospitality, even when not explicitly mentioned in the text. Using four parables as case studies (the Prodigal Son, the Friend at Midnight, the Good Samaritan, and the Sower), the article argues that modern interpretations often perpetuate patriarchal silencing by failing to acknowledge these hidden women. It further connects this erasure to the ongoing crisis of gender-based violence, particularly in the South African context. By reading the parables through a lens that recognises women's historical and theological significance, the article offers a transformative approach for biblical scholarship, churches and theological education to confront gender injustice and promote inclusive interpretation.

Contribution: This article contributes to the HTS Theological Studies special collection by proposing an unhiding reading of Jesus' parables. Rooted in social-scientific criticism, it challenges patriarchal erasures of women in biblical interpretation. This hermeneutic offers a transformative tool for theological education and faith communities to address gender-based violence (GBV) in the South African context.

Keywords: feminist biblical hermeneutics; unhiding reading; parables of Jesus; gender-based violence; women in the Bible; patriarchy and theology; theological education; counter-narrative theology.

Introduction

South Africa is a country plagued by gender-based violence (GBV). The statistics are shocking, and this pandemic has claimed the lives of many women, one every 8 h in South Africa (Banda 2020:1). This appalling statistic contributes to South Africa having a GBV trend five times higher than the global average. The problem is further exacerbated by high levels of poverty and unemployment in the country, and during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown, many women were forced to isolate in their houses with their abusers simultaneously ramping up GBV figures while lowering the amount of incidents reported.[1] Understandably, this onslaught on women has also led to a massive distrust of men[2] (Banda 2020:1; Makou 2017).

The GBV disproportionately targets women and children, emphasising the unequal power relations between men and women and how certain patriarchal gender roles have been normalised. Moreover, these gender roles are deeply rooted in many, although not all, African cultures and traditions and are entrenched in institutions such as religious communities and educational organisations. This article ultimately aims to unhide the voices of women, a necessary task seeing that systemic gender inequalities essentially strip women of their voices, voices that are essential to their stories being heard, thereby removing human rights from women. New and innovative

1. Statistics during the pandemic indicate that during the first week of lockdown, approximately 87 000 cases of domestic abuse were reported to the police (Joska et al. 2020). There were also around 2300 complaints filed and 12 000 GBV-related calls on the national GBV command hotline (Rakubu & Olofinbiyi 2022; Uzobo & Ayinmoro 2023). All of this was interpreted as a sudden and severe rise in GBV numbers with studies consistently describing women as 'trapped' or 'locked in' with their perpetrators (Dekel & Abrahams 2021).

2. A distrust in male clergy and the church has also developed. Brock and Parker (2001:20–21) recall a chilling encounter with a woman who has been abused by her husband for 20 years and only after building trust with another woman speaks out against her abuser. Her fear and abuse were amplified by a male clergy turning her away two decades before and advising her to return to her abusive husband and rejoice in her suffering as it will bring her closer to the suffering of Christ on the cross.

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ways of combating GBV are needed from all disciplines within society and academia, especially within an African context (Enaifoghe et al. 2021:118–119). It is easy to see that the pandemic of GBV should be fought on all fronts with biblical exegesis and interpretation being the one that this article will focus on.

This article will provide a section on methodology and propose an application of the said methodology to the parables of Jesus. Thereafter, an application and theory section will discuss how this way of reading the parables can not only inform an inclusive reading of the text and accurate portrayal of women but also serve as a means to combat GBV through faith communities' and academic interpretations of given parables.

The methodology behind an unhiding reading of the parables

An unhiding reading of the parables will be used in this article rooted within social-scientific and historical criticism to, as closely as possible, determine how the first-century hearers of the parables of Jesus would have understood women to be present even if they do not seem to be present to modern readers and interpreters of the texts. Some elements in our modern Bibles prompt us to read the text in certain ways even before engaging with the text. These include headings that precede certain pericopes, such as the Prodigal Son, the Sower, the Friend at Midnight, and the Good Samaritan, prompting readers to focus on a certain character or outcome. In this way, other possible characters are ignored or pre-emptively understood to be absent (Levine 2014:30; Scott 1989:4). However, these features were not present for ancient audiences. Moreover, an unhiding reading views parables as real-life scenarios that played out in rural Galilee and was directed to, and understood as such by, the agrarian, subsistence community and peasants of the first century (Kloppenborg 2014:490).

An unhiding reading of the parables, at its core, focusses on three important criteria. Firstly, unhiding is important and unique in its approach as it focusses on parables, which are narratives at heart and invites audiences to engage their imaginative skills. These narratives, stories and accounts are set within the realia and emic environment of the first-century Mediterranean. Because unhiding is concerned with these ancient narratives, it finds its methodological roots in not only historical and social-scientific criticism but also hermeneutical imagination and women's history. To be very clear, this positions the methodology firmly within the ancient context and within ancient society, aiming to understand their lives and contexts, not that of the modern exegete or interpreter. However, because modern audiences and faith communities engage with ancient texts, there is an opportunity for the concept and hermeneutical tool of unhiding to have greater effect, which is why GBV is discussed within the scope of this article, not as an afterthought but rather using an unhiding reading as a point of departure for further study and exploration into its value in social pandemics such as GBV and the hiding of other minorities and vulnerable communities.

Secondly, unhiding does not assume that women are absent (whether in the parables or in modern faith communities) because of patriarchal norms. Of course, patriarchy permeated ancient society and is naturally present in the parable narratives; however, even with patriarchal constructs present, women are not absent; they are hidden, present in the parable as it plays out in the thoughts and imaginations of the audience, even if absent from the words on the pages. This makes the concept of unhiding, although not perfect, very important. It serves as a hermeneutic device that reminds both the modern reader that they do not possess the same ancient culture and context of the ancient hearer and also focusses the reader to find what is not overtly mentioned in the text (as the very word: unhiding, draws the reader's attention to what is there but hidden), for example, female characters. The focus becomes what you cannot see, what appears to absent but is merely hidden from our modern, anachronistic eyes. This differentiation is important, as an unhiding reading does not aim to use ethnocentric or anachronistic methodologies to apply the text to personal or modern contexts; in fact, the aim is the exact opposite. It is to understand the ancient context, as best as possible, and find that it can align with current modern feminist theories and methodologies. However, an unhiding reading finds its foundation rooted within the ancient contexts of the parables. It trusts the imaginative constructions of the the ancient audience, constructions informed by the social realities and scripts of first century. This point is also important when considering this article's focus on GBV and the possible contribution that this research makes towards fighting abuse, injustice and inequality. Through this article, it should become clear that an unhiding reading can be used as a tool by social actors, educators and faith-based organisations to address GBV within their communities and classrooms.

Thirdly, an unhiding reading asserts that, without imagining female characters as important and present, the parables are read unjustly and inaccurately. When considering the illiteracy numbers in ancient societies and bearing in mind that most heard the stories from others, both teller and hearer relying on their imagination. The parables were, therefore, understood within a hermeneutical framework of imaginative construction and within that construction, an unhiding reading argues, women are present, visible and important characters. This imaginative construction builds upon and is supported by the two points made above. Because the audience understands their own realia and is situated in a high-context society rooted in their own emic knowledge, it informs their way of imagining, the pictures and details they see when the worlds of the parables are spoken. The vistas, rooms, conversations and peoples that occupy their thoughts when the parable narratives are recanted. Words, such as house [*oikos*], would have

immediately conjured up images of wives, daughters, female slaves, female labourers and female entertainers.[3] This way of imagining is different from the images that would typically be evoked in modern audiences and exegetes. To the ancient audience of the parables, house meant woman in some cases quite literally.[4] It is precisely because of these processes that an unhiding reading argues that female characters would appear in the audience's minds-eyes when not only hearing or reading the parables but also when recalling them later on or thinking on them as they go about their lives. Therefore, if women were present, as important, and a part of ancient society, then to read the parables without considering them as such is inaccurate and not faithful to the intended interpretation and understanding of the ancient audience. Women are, therefore, not absent from the text although at face value it would appear so; they are merely hidden. An unhiding reading aims to redirect the point of departure when interpreting the text to focus on the ancient audience's emic understanding and imagining of the narratives, in which women are unhidden, instead of trusting the text at face value, wherein women become absent. It is, therefore, a more accurate and faithful reading of the text.

To be clear patriarchy is present in the parable texts. The male authors of the texts most likely did not place enough value on the roles and importance of women and could possibly have purposefully hidden their roles and presence from the narratives as they were deemed a distraction or unimportant. It should, however, also be considered that the authors knew that the intended audience of their work would imagine women as present, even if not mentioned, as they themselves would have been aware of the presence of women in the parable settings they described. Perhaps a combination of both of the above is true; however, it should be clear that in the view of this author, patriarchy was unsuccessful in removing women from these narratives and could only succeed in hiding them. Female characters were unhidden in the imagination of the ancient audience of the parables, and with the help of an unhiding reading, they can be unhidden to modern audiences too.

Both women and men have always been active agents in history. They have always shared the world and, therefore, equally participated in the events that shaped the world that we occupy today. Lerner (1987:4) in her seminal work on women's history: *The creation of patriarchy* argues that there are two sets of histories. The first (h)istory, spelled with a lower case, represents the unrecorded past, which represents all past events as recollected by human beings. The second (H)istory, spelled with an upper case, represents the recorded and interpreted past. Lerner (1987), when addressing this recorded and interpreted past, observes that:

> [*U*]ntil the most recent past, these historians have been men, and what they have recorded is what men have done and experienced and found significant. They have called this history and have claimed universality for it. What women have done and experienced has been left unrecorded, neglected, and ignored in interpretation. (p. 4)

The effect of this is that half of the population of the human race has been partially ignored, or distorted, favouring the perspective of a man in the act of recording history. Therefore, women's history focusses on the acknowledgement and inclusion of the voices, roles and lives of women in the recorded and interpreted past, thereby creating a more complete and accurate picture of what history truly looked like. Women's history also plays an important role in creating a counter narrative to current biblical scholarship, especially in the lack of representation of the voices of women in biblical commentaries, books and articles when interpreting the parables of Jesus.

In the following section, four parables will be used as case studies to illustrate how women's voices in the parables can be unhidden to not only give a more complete and accurate view of history but also add to an inclusive, transformative view on femininities that could be a useful tool in battling GBV and patriarchal, ecclesial structures that still enforces, ignores or allows intimate partner violence.

Unhiding the voices of women in four parables (The Prodigal Son, the Friend at Midnight, the Good Samaritan, and the Sower)

For the sake of brevity, the above-mentioned methodology will be applied to the four parables[5] selected, providing a summary of previous work on unhiding in these parables and how women were understood to be present and important to the narratives. In the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11–32), women are essential to the father's change of heart. The opening line, 'There was a man who had two sons' (Lk 15:11), implies a hidden mother. Josephus (*Ant*. 15.7.29) recounts women mediating inheritance disputes, suggesting that the mother may have softened the father's heart (Rohrbaugh 1997:147). Furthermore, women were the servers and hostesses of feasts, a role critical for adhering to purity laws (Kraemer 1992:143; Levine 2014:23; Neusner 1984:59). The role of hostesses and sanctifiers of the household was so important and critically feminine that it led Crossan (1993:404) to picture Jesus as becoming female when he hosted observing that 'long before Jesus was host, he was hostess'. Early second-century papyri (e.g. *BGU* III 846) even

3. This work is grounded in the PhD research of the author wherein the author supplies helpful tables that map each verse of the parable and where the emic audience would have imagined women present in each parable (Du Toit 2025).

4. The concept of 'Woman-as-house' was a deeply embedded cultural and linguistic framework where the physical domicile and the female body were often treated as interchangeable. This metaphor is most commonly rooted in most the Greek verb οἰκοδομέω [*oikodomeō*], which Luke uses for building a house and the Septuagint uses for the divine 'building' of Eve, thereby linking the construction of a dwelling directly to the creation of Woman. Within this ancient worldview, particularly in rabbinic tradition, a man's 'house' was legally and symbolically synonymous with his wife, and a woman was viewed as a 'house within the house' who physically housed children within her own body (*m. Yoma* 1:1; also see Baker 2002:48; Fonrobert 2000:40–67).

5. For the purposes of this article, the parables of the Prodigal Son, Friend at Midnight, Good Samaritan, and the Sower will be used as case studies. See the work of Du Toit (Du Toit 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d, 2025; Du Toit & Van Eck 2025) for a more complete study on using a unhiding reading as a hermeneutic tool to unhide the voices of women and create alternative reading scenarios for the parables.

echo this narrative with a son returning to his mother (Kloppenborg 2008:190). The Prodigal returns not just to a father's feast but also to one women carefully prepared and to the arms his mother readied (Du Toit 2022b:5).

The Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5–8) similarly hides an obvious woman. In Luke 11:7, the friend claims, 'The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed', implying he is alone. This is unlikely; women were primary caregivers, often sleeping with children to protect them from harm (Balch & Osiek 1997:41; Garroway 2018:128). According to Tacitus (*Hist*. 5.4–5), Judeans often separated sleeping arrangements, making it unlikely that the father was alone in bed with children. In poorer households, the family slept in the same room. Therefore, a mother or female slave is almost certainly present, yet the text mentions only the father and children (Du Toit 2022a:1–7).

The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37) seemingly lacks women, yet women frequently travelled ancient roads, often alone. Oxyrhynchus papyri (*P. Oxy* 9.1218, l. 6–7) describe women travelling without companions for various reasons (Blumell 2011:245; Foubert 2016:296). It is likely that women occupied the road where the parable is set. Furthermore, while commentaries often limit women in inns to prostitutes, they were critical to the establishment. Women were often innkeepers, bookkeepers and entertainers (Pomeroy 1995:88–92; Schaps 1981:61–62). Aspasia, a famous female innkeeper praised by Plutarch (*Them*. 24.3), exemplifies this agency (Du Toit 2024:1–5).

The Sower (Lk 8:5–8) is similarly void of explicit women, yet their presence is critical. As the sower scatters seed, one must imagine the preparation of agricultural spaces – a task involving women. Historical sources indicate women participated in harvesting, gleaning and soil preparation (Pollux *Onom*. 1.222; Plutarch *Mor*. 784a). The 'good soil' may be fertile through the labour of wives, daughters or slaves (Culpepper 2024:150; Scheidel 1996:1–10). Moreover, the sower's seed pouch was likely manufactured by women, who dominated textile production (Bundrick 2008:286–288; Foxhall 2023:83). The parable depends on a hidden cast of women whose labour enables the narrative, yet whose voices have been rendered silent by androcentric interpretation (Du Toit & Van Eck 2025).

These parables clearly feature women acting in the background and maintaining the systems allowing men to act. This unhiding reading provides a scenario where the audience understood women as an active presence.

Gender-based violence, biblical scholarship and the church

The relationship between biblical interpretation and GBV has historically run deep. The Genesis 1 and 2 creation narratives have popularly been used to enforce a model of human creation that places women in a subservient role to men. Research carried out on *imago Dei* and other similar concepts have helped to address GBV and create just and life-affirming theologies out of biblical texts and narratives; however, more can be done by biblical scholars to address the GBV pandemic (Banda 2020:1; Simango 2012). Moreover, churches, faith communities and the pastors and clergy that represent these institutions have a responsibility when it comes to addressing GBV. Patriarchal, androcentric theology is entrenched in the ordinary theology of many Christians and 'are being handed down by pastors and family members, in sermons and songs, in articles in church magazines and in remarks made during catechesis or pastoral counselling' (Mulder 2013:200). This, again, places rightful attention on the voices of the marginalised. One possible counter narrative to most of the dominant theological traditions is to give voice to women who have been silenced and hidden through discourses in faith communities not only when seeking help but also in the theology and textual interpretation that occurs within spaces of worship. It is because of this hiding of women's voices that some scholars have argued for the development of a theological counter-tradition. The starting point of this counter-tradition, or counter narrative, is to admit that words and images have power and can transform those who hear and read them (Mulder 2013:200). Therefore, transformation takes places when these images and words are used to 'empower those suffering from domestic violence to change their self-perceptions and situations' (Mulder 2013:200). Moreover, this counter narrative has the potential to transform ideas of both femininities and masculinities, as the unhidden voices of women ask critical questions of how we read and imagine the text to be. It is possible that through applying the hermeneutic of unhiding, our churches, universities, seminaries and communities will become places more attuned and sensitive to the hidden voices around them.

Even though this article focusses on the reading and interpretation of the parables of Jesus, it aims to add an important and unique perspective to assist in the fight against GBV, fostering a sensitivity for vulnerable characters and actors. It does so by means of an unhiding reading and imagining the hidden voices of women as present and important, thereby, aiming to transform the way the text is read and contributing to understanding the presence and importance of women who have historically been understood as absent in the text and in our churches and communities. This not only contributes to transformative femininities, as the reader now understands entire female characters to be present and critical in the texts but also adds to transformative masculinities, as the reader (both male and female) is asked to imagine a new reading and thereby has to re-evaluate their own positionality and role.

A good example of this can be found in the parable of the Friend at Midnight in Luke 11:5–8. In the narrative, the neighbour sets out to seek bread to give to the arriving guest; however, no mention is made of his wife or the women of the town or village. In fact, the parable contains no mention of any women; however, in this typical first-century scenario where a guest would enter a village in search of food and

lodging, women, mostly wives, would also go out in search of bread and crockery to accommodate the arriving guest. Therefore, women took joint responsibility for the hospitality and reciprocity shown to the arriving guest (Bailey 1976: 120–123; Du Toit 2022a:3; Herzog 1994:204; Huffard 1978: 157–159). Women were active in these narratives and had a stake in the honour and shame dynamic of the household and would act accordingly to protect the honour of the house and their community (Neusner 1984:59).

Gender-based violence and the *oikos* [house]

Private spaces remain the places where GBV most frequently occurs, none more frequent than the household and home. Although troubling, this sheds some light on the important role that the home and household still plays in today's culture (Banda 2020:1). In the first century, the household was primarily the domain of women. Women took chief responsibility for domestic tasks such as food preparations, hospitality and purity rites. In the parables of the Prodigal Son, Friend at Midnight, Good Samaritan, and the Sower, the house[6] is a central location. It is likely that the first-century audience of the parables would, therefore, understand women to be present whenever the household appears, or is implied, in the narrative.

However, within certain academic and ecclesial spaces, women are not the focus, or even addressed as present, within biblical narratives. Responsible hermeneutics would allow for the voices of women to be heard as a counter narrative to centuries of patriarchal and androcentric interpretations that has diluted women's presence to negative or subservient roles, such as wives or prostitutes. One of the ways that this transformation can occur is by developing a reading against the grain of the text, wherein an alternative reading scenario, such as the unhiding reading, is used to imagine an alternative, more accurate, and inclusive, reading of parables and biblical narratives.

Unhiding as a response to gender-based violence in South Africa

The unhiding reading is more than an interpretive technique; it is a prophetic call to action. In the South African context, where the GBV pandemic claims a woman's life every 8 h, the silencing of women in sacred texts mirrors the systemic stripping of their voices in society. By practicing a 'double imagination', we align our modern minds with the ancient audience who saw women as essential actors in the *oikos*. This methodology offers a 'justice imperative' that directly challenges the theological frameworks used to justify subservience and violence.

When we unhide the women who baked the bread in the Friend at Midnight or the mother who mediated the family dispute in the Prodigal Son, we are not just correcting history; we are dismantling the 'hiddenness' that allows abuse to thrive in the shadows. For victims of Intimate Partner Violence in South Africa, seeing themselves as essential, agency-driven participants in the parables – rather than mere background props – can be a profound act of healing. It empowers those suffering to change their self-perceptions from victims to indispensable 'architects' of their communal and spiritual worlds.

Furthermore, unhiding serves as a tool for 'transformative masculinities'. It forces the male reader to re-evaluate his positionality by revealing that the 'kingdom of God' is not a male-only space but a communal reality dependent on the labour and honour of women. This shift in the pulpit and the pew insists that visibility precedes justice. By asking, 'Whose hands were on the loom?' or 'Who prepared the feast?', faith communities are trained to look for those who are overlooked in their own congregations. Only when the church acknowledges that women were never absent from the gospel can it effectively seek out, comfort and assist those who are currently hidden and unheard because of violence (see Du Toit 2026:51–54).

An unhiding reading compels us to re-evaluate the domestic sphere not simply as a backdrop for masculine action but as the locus of women's agency and resilience. By foregrounding women's labour – preparing the table, tending to purity rites and safeguarding familial honour – we expose how their contributions are essential to both the narrative coherence of the parables and the well-being of contemporary households. In practical terms, this methodology invites preachers, liturgists and faith leaders to revisit their sermons and liturgies through an 'oikocentric' lens: when proclaiming texts from the house of God, we must deliberately address and affirm the presence of hidden women among their congregations.

Such a shift has direct implications for combating GBV, for it insists that visibility precedes justice: only when women's voices are heard, both in the pulpit and in parish life, can communities confront and dismantle the structural forces that perpetuate violence. In this way, the hermeneutic of unhiding becomes a transformative praxis – uncovering unseen female characters in the gospel stories and empowering women sitting in our churches today to claim their rightful place at the table of faith.

A brief word on academia and theological training

A methodology reading against the grain adds to the concept of counter narrative. Church tradition has focused on male voices in parables and communities, an ideology informed by scripture. This leads to a double injustice: women are hidden in both the text and the community. Theological education should address this (Mulder 2013:200).

In the four case studies, women are rarely discussed in publications that inform future clergy. When discussed,

6. In the case of the Good Samaritan, the house is replaced by the inn as inns where often houses that have been refurbished for hospitality use. It can also be considered that, in the parable of the Sower, the household would be the place where the sower 'went out from' (Lk 8:4), the same house where his wife and/or daughters would repair and fabricate his pouch.

they are diluted to roles such as prostitute or mother without nuance. This sets a precedent for students to read women as absent. For instance, the Prodigal Son is typically interpreted from the male perspective, ignoring the mother implied in Luke 15:11. Most commentaries overlook women's roles in hospitality and reconciliation (Du Toit 2022b:3; Instone-Brewer 2002:124; Loader 2012:102; Stambaugh & Balch 1986:84; Treggiari 2003:175).

Similarly, the children in Friend at Midnight are rarely discussed, despite women being their primary caregivers. Commentaries on the Good Samaritan focus on men, ignoring women as innkeepers or travellers. Finally, the Sower lacks research on women in textile manufacturing or gleaning (Boice 1983:153; Capon 2002:255; Du Toit 2022a:2–3; Forbes 2000:74; Huffard 1978:158; Herzog 1994:203; Jeremias 1972:157; Levine 2014:215; Liefeld 2000:246; Lischer 2014:67; Oesterley 1936:225; Pentecost 1982:70; Pilch 1993:150; Schottroff 2006:189; Zimmermann 2015:294).

These case studies show women as active members excluded from tradition. However, the first-century audience understood them to be present (Du Toit 2022a, 2022b, 2022c; Du Toit & Van Eck 2025). This places a direct theological responsibility on leaders in both ecclesial and educational spaces to unhide the voices of women and acknowledge their active and critical roles within the parables of Jesus and the entire New Testament.

To read women as active, present and valuable in the text has the potential to change the way that faith communities see women. In fact, it can unhide women within faith communities that were previously not seen or heard. It is from this perspective that the directionality of faith communities and leaders should change to seek out, comfort and assist women who are, or were, victims of GBV, women who are often hidden and unheard, just as in the parables. The church in South Africa, Africa and the entire world has a crucial part to play in the fight against GBV; however, she cannot be effective in this fight if a positionality of unhiding the voices of women is not taken. In this way, the exegetical tool and concept of unhiding the voices of women in the parables can assist faith communities to shift their understanding, not only of the biblical narratives but also of the very congregational, and societal, members that very faith community aims to serve and unhide those voices that are hidden in plain sight.

Conclusion

This article demonstrated that women were never absent from Jesus' parables, simply hidden by patriarchal culture and androcentric interpretation. The unhiding methodology exposes women's deep presence and illuminates the injustice of their exclusion. Women sustained the *oikos*, feeding, hosting, healing and harvesting, yet we interpret as if they were absent. Failing to account for the women ancient audiences saw perpetuates a harmful silence echoing in our homes and seminaries.

We must unhide them. Churches must reimagine the gospel as arising from women's participation. Pulpits and counselling rooms must become spaces where hidden women are honoured. Universities must re-evaluate curricula, integrating feminist hermeneutics to train students to read for what the text implies. Unhiding is a moral imperative and a means of healing. To unhide the women in the parables is to unhide the women in our pews and households, and ultimately, to unhide the image of God that patriarchy has obscured.

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Charel D. du Toit: Conceptualisation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft. The author confirms that this work is entirely their own, has reviewed the article, approved the final version for submission and publication and takes full responsibility for the integrity of its findings.

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