



Emily Fox King  
"Bitumen"  
oil on canvas, 48" x 48"

# FOUR WORDS: A SMALL CHANGE WITH AN ETERNITY OF IMPACT

Sara Lake

Today, I went to the new initiatory session. When I arrived, the cute workers excitedly whispered to each other, “we have a patron!”

I was the first of the day.

It felt so good to be there.

Regardless of my thoughts on the necessity or literalism of the temple ceremonies, I still feel such a distinct holiness and peace there. Something I believe is powered by the faith of the people, willing it so.

The first time through, the worker accidentally recited the line: that you may hear the . . .

counsel of your husband

. . . then fumbled to correct herself before proceeding with blessing that I may hear the . . .

voice of the Lord.

Four words.

I started crying.

As soon as the blessing ended, I asked if that line had actually been removed. She quickly and a little uncomfortably said “yes.” Then, looking down, quietly shrugged, “I’m not sure exactly why it matters?”

I leaned into her space a little, and knowing I was the only patron rotating through, paused to tell her that to many women the absence of those four words would be profoundly reassuring. I shared that I know women who have felt hurt or demeaned by those words— who have carried unresolved concern over their implications on their circumstances. I expressed that deleting them gives greater and proper emphasis to our

ability to hear and listen the Lord's voice, for ourselves. My emotion was showing and I reached to touch her arm as I expressed my personal appreciation for the change.

She smiled, and with tender eyes reached her hand onto mine in a conveyed respect as she proceeded. I could tell my heart reached hers and she understood something more through my perspective.



I let the ceremony, each word, speak to me in ways that I have missed. I rotated through a few times more and talked with the other workers about that small change. They were all so beautiful and receptive.

I rotated back to the first worker again in the same room. She paused at that very same place, distinctly leaving the husband reference out this time, and then began to sweetly cry when she blessed:

. . . that I may hear the voice of the Lord.

It meant something new to her, I could tell—and I was moved by the humility I witnessed.

It's not that I give undue power to the language—the change is meaningful because it shows that people were willing to evaluate the significance of the words and hear a different perspective—then make a change for the better.

*That* is what is reassuring.

Seeing tradition, pride, and even stubborn patriarchy challenged and slowly being chipped away . . . in small ways, but significant ways nonetheless.

I know for some this is a little too late, or too little change. I hear you. My heart pangs for you with both gratitude and remorse for your painful pioneering. But for me, today, it's meaningful progress.



Four words changed.

And it led to a moment of spiritual growth and connectedness; two women connecting our hearts with each other, and with God—

In gratitude for progress and acknowledgement of the divine capability—and responsibility—each of us has to

Hear the voice of the Lord!