

S10 E11 - Sister Part 4 Transcript

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hi and welcome to season 10 of the Abiding Together Podcast. We are so excited to have you with us this season. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement on your journey with Jesus Christ. My name is Sr Miriam James Heidland, and every week I am joined by two of my dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. We talk about our life with Christ. We talk about big things, small things, beautiful things, sorrowful things. We laugh, we cry you'll fit right in. You are most welcome here. So please grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hello and welcome to the Abiding Together podcast. For our viewing audience, you can see us. For our audio audience, you can hear us. And here we are, I was just doing Darth Vader into the microphone.

Michelle Benzinger: She's like heavy breathing.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: This is where we're at right now. We've done Darth Vader, we're into Star Wars right now.

Heather Khym: Yes, 12 episodes in two days. We are champions right now. Yes. - I'm so proud of us. Like we've actually been mostly focused, a little slap happy.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, we have, it's been really good, you know, but it's been really good conversation.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Mostly, yeah, we have. We've been pretty task oriented.

Michelle Benzinger: It's been really good, you know, but it's been really good conversation.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, it's been very good conversation.

Heather Khym: And so fun to be together because, yeah, I can only remember twice, I think, that we did this. One was on your floor in your office at home one time.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh yeah, I remember that.

Heather Khym: And one was at my house. And so this is like such a gift.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And this is way, like an upgrade. I mean like we're in a studio.

Heather Khym: Spirit Juice is making us look really good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: They're making us look really good. Yeah. It takes a lot of work.

Heather Khym: They did a good job.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: They're doing it, so yeah.

Michelle Benzinger: It takes a lot of people.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It takes a whole village of people to make us look good.

Heather Khym: There is a whole village in this room right now.

Michelle Benzinger: Yes, there is a whole village. I'm gonna take a picture of the village in a little while.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, they're all so lovely. We said on a previous podcast, but it's an amazing thing that all the women in the studio today are all women. Like, we don't ever have that happen.

Michelle Benzinger: I kinda feel like I'm in a Wonder Woman movie.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: We are, we are Wonder Women, so. We are at part four of our series on the relationship or the identity of a sister. And so if you've been joining us this last three parts, we're going to talk about the redemption of sisterhood today, and it's been a great discussion. I'm so glad that, I was thinking about it last night before I fell asleep, that I'm just so glad that we've taken the time to go through daughter and through sister at four different episodes, which really allows for such a better vision and also just an unfolding of our own hearts and just allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire us. And so it's not just like one episode of 40 minutes, but it's really great.

Heather Khym: Yeah and you know, some of you might be thinking, gosh, this is a little redundant, some of these things, they keep going into it. And I think it's important though, because we did talk about, at the very beginning, that this season we wanna marinate in some of these topics. That was the word you used,

Michelle, and I think it's a great word because often we do slip by things very quickly and we don't take time to let it take root in our heart. So I hope that these conversations that we're having are allowing people really to like sit in it a little bit longer, ask the deeper questions, wait for some answers, you know, and take time to reflect, so.

Michelle Benzinger: And I think also to really pray through each point and topic and stirring and all of that, and Sister is gonna lead us in a meditation on this episode also in a little while, and just to really pray through it. So one of our hopes and prayers for this whole series, this podcast season, is that it takes root like at the very beginning. That's how we started with daughter, rooted and grounded. And now for this, like for it, you know, to really, even with the scripture that we're using now, for all of it to take root in our hearts and to bear fruit. We're hoping that this will go deep and these are not shallow concepts. These are very deep concepts, and so deep calling is a deep, that was actually our mass reading today.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It's like the Gospel is real or something.

Michelle Benzinger: The Gospel is real, who knew, who knew.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So we're going to once again, proclaim our particular Gospel passage for this episode and it is from Luke chapter one verses 39 to 56. So here we go. At that time, Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you bear!" But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her. And Mary replied, "my soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. And from this day, all generations will call me blessed. The Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm. He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but he has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home. Amen There's a great, Michelle, you're gonna kick us off here, but there's a great quote that you have from Little Women, which I like the quote, it reminds me of something that was in

Cinderella, the Disney version of Cinderella. Do you wanna read that for our viewers and our listeners, now we can save viewers.

Michelle Benzinger: We can, look at us. It says helping one another is part of the religion of our sisterhood - Jo March from Little Women. Such a great heroine that Jo in Little Women. But I think for our hopes and dreams for this, to close us out on the part of sisterhood, is what does it look like to really celebrate women? What does it look like to redeem sisterhood and still areas that we need to have redemption in these areas of sisterhood? And what does it look like to champion other women? And Sister was talking, I mean, Heather, was talking about like, her mother does a good job of setting a table.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Literally.

Michelle Benzinger: Literally. But there's room for everyone at the table, and that our God is a God of spirit of abundance and not scarcity. So I think a lot of times when we do the comparison game with sisters and I think, oh my goodness, like now in the age of social media and Instagram and all that, like, it's so easy to compare, so easy to just, you know, assume our judge or whatever. And like, but God is a God of abundance, not scarcity. That he has enough for each and every one of us and that we can champion and celebrate other people's successes and that doesn't take away from ours. Like, God's resources are infinite. And just because another sister is doing this, and maybe like they're doing something that's very similar to you, but you can still do you. Like, it hasn't been done by you. Each of us has a unique expression the Lord has put in us. And to realize that God is, yeah, he's infinite. And like we had in the Ephesian scripture before in daughter, he will do immeasurably more. We cannot even measure it because he is so vast and sovereign. And I mean, he's just huge. That he is a God of abundance and that he's not holding out on us. You know, so when we have that mindset, then we are almost release into freedom to really celebrate others and champion others. Like for me, I love cheering on other women. Like it is something, maybe it's just years of cheerleading, but I don't know, but I just love cheer. I remember...

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Michelle was a cheerleader, everybody catch that?

Heather Khym: Do we have any photographic evidence of that?

Michelle Benzinger: I do, I'll send you some.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Really? - We need this. Can we put that maybe on the webpage?

Heather Khym: I've known you all these years and still I feel like I don't know you.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I've never seen a picture of you as a cheerleader. We're just gonna veer off the path right now.

Michelle Benzinger: So, but if it means that much to you, I totally will.

Heather Khym: It means that much.

Michelle Benzinger: It does, obviously so. But anyway, but to do that, like, it was funny because I was telling my husband how excited I was about this other woman's initiative that she's doing. I'm like, oh my gosh, you should see this, this is awesome. And this was a couple of years ago and I remember my husband looking at me and goes, men aren't really like that. And he goes, you almost get more excited for other people than you do for yourself. He's like, that's interesting to me, like, I'm not used to that. Like, you know, my husband is a very charitable person, but he's like, it's just an interesting concept, like that you get more excited. But if I have the mindset that God is a God of abundance, there's enough for me. I don't have to try to, you know, hoard or whatever. Like he will provide, you know. So like just to really lean into the celebration of other women and the champion of other women and that his resources are infinite.

Heather Khym: Yeah, we've had some examples and experiences of that in recent years with other women who are in ministry as well, but there's been more of a.

Michelle Benzinger: Collaborative.

Heather Khym: Yeah, it has been a collaborative spirit, but also just celebrating each other's, you know, victories or things that are being done well, and it's been really beautiful to experience, but also to be a part of and to witness between other people. It's been awesome. Because the thing is is that there's room for everyone, like, and we're better together. We're stronger together. The way that our gifts compliment one another can make something that the world has never seen before. And I think I've witnessed that more and more as I've gotten older is like, oh my gosh, like that was good on its own and that was good on its own but you put that together, that is power, like in a way that we haven't seen before. And I think the Lord has been moving in the area of collaboration very apparently in the last several years, even in the worship world and all of that, and like things are better together. When people are bringing their unique gifts together.

Michelle Benzinger: Absolutely.

Heather Khym: And so, yeah, I remember one time I was doing a Bible study at our local parish and one of the young women who was coming, she hadn't been at church for a while and she was like, she just messaged me, she's like, I don't know if I'm gonna come back, like I just don't feel like I fit in the box, you know, whatever, like a Catholic women's Bible study. And then I'm like, there is no box girl. Like, you are welcome here. Like, you are welcome with who you are. Like, there is no box. And so I think for many of us, we can perceive that you have to be a certain way and maybe I don't fit in or I'm not welcome here or whatever. And I just think, I mean, I wanna say to people who have really felt that wound, like you are welcome here, you're welcome at the table of sisterhood, you know. There's a place for you at this table. Even if you feel like you're a tomboy or you grew up this way or you didn't have this or whatever, you don't have what it takes. Like, you are welcome at the table. And that bringing your unique gifts is gonna be a gift to everyone at that table.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, so good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I appreciate that. I appreciate the champion 'cause it's something you do really well, Michelle. And I appreciate what you're saying, Heather, about we're better together, like we're better. And I was, I think our podcast is a testament to that because that's something that people often say that we're all so different, and that people.

Michelle Benzinger: Really?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Just a little bit. But people will comment on just something you said or you said, and we could easily, I think each of us could have a standalone podcast and it would be successful, but there's something about the melding of all of our gifts and all of our points of view and all of our ways of seeing things, that's particularly a blessing to people and we are better together, like, we are better together.

Heather Khym: Yeah, also I would never do this on my own. Like, I don't have the guts to do something like this on my own. I am too shy. I don't think I have the personality for it, whatever I might tell myself, but like I just never would. I just never would, I would never take the initiative to do it. But it sounded fun to do it together. You know what I mean, 'cause then it's not all up to me. And it's like, oh, I can lean on you and you can lean on me. Yeah, and it's like that, this is just an example, of what it's like in a lot of different areas, I think for us.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And I really appreciate also that sister, like all the other identities, is relational. And we don't become sisters first, we're daughters

first. And so that means that we also, that we don't have to define our own selves or make a way for our own selves, that we have a God who is preparing the way for us. And so we can always rely upon him and turn back toward God in these areas. And I think when we were talking about, last episode, about the wounds of sisterhood and the wounds of femininity, and those places, like maybe in our hearts where we feel jealous or we feel envious or we feel like we have to compete, or I was sharing with you guys, there was a couple girls in high school I was so mean to. And just like looking at my own heart and asking the Father, okay, what's happening, like what's happening in my own heart? You know where, and Lord, is this really how you see me? Or is this, because the Lord doesn't compare us to each other. He doesn't compare us to each other and I think sometimes we can see, like we were talking about like more of a holistic approach to what's happening in the world, versus what's just happening in my tiny little, like, oh, God's not comparing me, I'm doing that because I feel threatened or I feel like, oh my gosh, maybe I won't be loved here, maybe I'll be left out. But God's like, no I'm not leaving you out. Like, you're just so lovely and we need you at the table. The world is better with you. And so that reality of the all encompassing sovereign God who is uniting us together. And he's the reason why we're together. Like, he's the reason why we're together. And he continually heals and unites and blesses, and the divine tapestry of humanity, which is stunning. It's just stunning to behold even the tiny part that we get to see.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh, I love it. And I think for me, like when I've personally had people ask me. I remember it was so interesting for me, like when we brought our children home from Haiti, just to find some support. We were living in the North Georgia mountains then. And I came across a great group of nondenominational women that had an adoption ministry. Like really, so, and I remember the first time that I did an event with them and one of the questions that they asked me for the very first time. So how can we champion you with what the Lord's put on your heart? How can we come around? And I was like, y'all I haven't heard this language before. Who are you? But it was like, how can we champion you for what the Lord's put on your heart? How, and then she said, how can we help midwife that for you? You know, and I'm like, oh, I thought I was just coming to be part of what you are. And they're like, but no! You know, like, and then the girl said, you have a gift to the body also. How can we champion that for you? And it was such a good mind shift change for me and such a good learning by osmosis, like learning because I experienced that. And so I shared.

Heather Khym: That was kind of the first time you heard that.

Michelle Benzinger: Yes! And I was like, this is amazing. And how they did it and did it well. And how they linked arms with other women and really launched them in. And realizing how that God is not a God of addition, like I said earlier, he's a God of multiplication. And when they did that, it was like, we multiplied, you know. And

because there's a big hurting world out there and there's lots of things that need to be happening. But for me, it was such a good example of learning by example. So then, therefore, I can ask that question of other women. Like, one of my favorite age groups to be around is 20 somethings. Okay, what's the Lord stirring in your heart? What is he doing? What is he like? How can we release you in that? How can we launch you in that? What do you need? Like, and sometimes they just need someone to tell them, you have permission to do. Like, they don't really need permission, you know. They have everything in them, within their baptism, whatever. But sometimes you just need someone to tell you, okay, see, yeah you can do this. You have permission to do that, you know, because we don't want to give ourselves permission. Sometimes we feel like someone else needs to do it for us. But like, how do we launch other people? How do we ask those questions, you know, of other women to say, hey, what's on your heart? How can we come alongside of you? And like we were talking in the previous episode, it is intentional questions. It is maturing questions, it's intentional questions that you have to be able to say, what do you need, you know, to be celebrated? What do you need to be championed in this area? And how can I help you, you know? And I think that's learning almost a new language for some of us, you know? I know it was for me when I first heard it. So yeah.

Heather Khym: Yeah, I love that image of being a midwife. To midwife the dreams of others, you know. Like when you think about a baby being born, like there's a doctor saying, it's time to push now, you know, like, it's time now, or a midwife there, it's time now. And sometimes you don't know, or sometimes you get scared, like, no, no, no, it's not time, it's not time. Like we'll just, you know, it's like, nope, this has got to come right now. Like the Holy Spirit's moving right now in regards to dreams. That has been so powerful in my own life. And I think that that is like, it is an unknown way for most people of how to relate to another person. I mean, are we having those conversations all the time? Like I can't say in every single friendship I have that I'm having those conversations. And I'm even thinking, yeah, there's probably a couple that I would love to ask that question to. Where I deeply go there with certain people, but maybe not others. But I think it's an important question. Do we even know what the dreams are? The Holy Spirit dreams in another person's heart so that we can come alongside and be a sister and be a midwife there?

Michelle Benzinger: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: In that book that we've been talking about, The Family Life Model, it talks about how, I believe it's they talk about how we really need three to four generations of people to really heal, to heal our hearts, to really be in commune with people. So we talk about, you know, as we get older as women and men, especially, but sometimes we, you know, the lie of maybe the older generation is I'm not relevant anymore. Especially with technology of the younger

generation, now it's like teenagers know how to do stuff better than you so, there's a way, and I think especially, unfortunately our society, we've kind of ostracized our elderly members and we think they don't have anything to give us. 'Cause you don't know how it is here. When we have really cut off in so many ways, the deep wisdom of our elders, who have so much to offer. And so that reality of their particular gift to us, and then a younger generation, just the whole, the wisdom of the heart. I mean I remember there was a commercial, that I often show sometimes to audiences, and it talks about how if you could be, which is interesting to think of, if you could be any age, what age would you be? Like if you could be any age and it's just, it's interesting to think of. And they interview a variety of people, who some wanna be younger, some wanna be older, and here's why they do. But they interviewed, at the very end, a lovely woman and she was 80. And she said, I love being 80. She's like, although it's considered the autumn of our years, just think of how beautiful autumn is. And I was just thinking of those, like the wisdom that's only held with elders and we need every generation, like we need all of them. We don't just need women our age or just younger women, like we need all the women because they have a gift to give us. Like I know in our religious community, we're not an old religious community, but we do have older members. And it is easier as a younger member to say, oh, we know what's best. And everybody says that when they come into something new, like, oh no, we know how it's best. And if we had any idea, if we knew what we were doing, we would listen. We would listen because that's really important and we need that. We need that, all of that kind of wisdom.

Heather Khym: I'm curious, what age would you wanna be? 'Cause you've had time to think about it if you show it. Like right when you said it, I'm like, I don't know what I'd say. I was like, I'd be younger. And I'm like, no, it's too hard. Like, I didn't know anything. Like, and then yeah, like what, I'm like, I don't want the aches and pains of being older.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I think it depends on the day.

Michelle Benzinger: That's what I was about to say, yeah.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, those are, I mean, this might be a bit of a rabbit hole, but those are hard things to imagine because I think all of us, so I say as sisters, like women, all of us, I think, have places in our life where we could say, if I could just have one do-over or, but then once you start doing that, like we talked about earlier, once you start changing things, it changes everything. And so trusting that in salvation history, you know, in our stories that God will make all things right. And he allowed what to happen to happen. And in the mysteriousness, I remember I was doing a retreat a couple of years ago with a priest, and he said, sister, you might be very careful about wishing that that wouldn't have happened to you. And he said, that's the spirit of death. He said, Christ never says that to you. Christ never

says, look at you, your life would be different if you wouldn't have done that. He said, be very careful. He's like, that's a tool of the enemy. And every time I'm tempted to do that at times, his voice will always come back to me saying, don't, it's a temptation, he's like, that's the enemy, don't do that. He said, let's just trust that God, in these very places is writing your story of salvation history and let's trust him.

Heather Khym: And then he's gonna make all things new. Wow, that's so good.

Michelle Benzinger: That is so good.

Heather Khym: Yeah, I think when I think about that question, you know, what I kind of rattled through in my mind really quick was like my life in decades. And I'm like, you know, in fact each decade has brought things to me, like that are very important things. Like, I mean, my 30s, I was like, yay 30s. When I first got into my 30s, I was like, whoa, like I got flattened in my 30s. But what I gained from the 30s, like, I wouldn't go back and say, take that all away. Like, because I feel like the wisdom that's come, more importantly the intimacy that's come, in my relationship with God because of the sorrow of the 30s. Like, and the self-awareness that grew in that season, you know. I think every season has something to give and something to offer and things to be pruned and things to be taken away.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So true.

Heather Khym: So to just like allow the process to happen, to stay close to Jesus in those different seasonal changes of our life, but to also be able to come alongside each other when we're in the ups and downs, the, you know, the valleys and the mountaintops experiences.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Oh, that's so good. Yeah, I think I would just be where I am, you know, because of the wisdom. Yeah, what I've learned, and.

Heather Khym: And you are older and wiser.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, I am older and wiser, yes I am. I am the most older and wiser.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Look at those tiny hands. Look at, she's like.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh my gosh, please no. Do you see what I have to deal with?

Heather Khym: It's all love, honey, it's love.

Michelle Benzinger: I may need emotional healing from this episode.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: We can do that later if you want.

Heather Khym: It's playful love.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: That's all in a day's work, yeah.

Heather Khym: Listen, we wanna honor our elders, so go ahead, Michelle.

Michelle Benzinger: Anyway, before I was so rudely interrupted, but no, I think there is something about always constantly growing, you know, like I was telling you, like I'm probably gonna go back and take some classes this year because I love learning. I love growing. I love transforming. I love changing. I absolutely love learning new things, you know. And it's so funny when young adult people ask me, like, what are some of the most important things about marriage, attributes about marriage? You know, one I said, you know, faith backgrounds, you know, self-awareness, you know, but one of the big things I also say is the desire to grow and change and transform, you know, with another person. To really want to grow and change and transform together as people, you know. To be rooted to one another, but also to grow and transform because I think that's so important. And so like, if you have not been celebrated by a sister or you need to learn how to celebrate other sisters, guess what we can learn and grow and transform, we can do it. You know, we're always changing. God is always transforming us from glory to glory.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So great.

Michelle Benzinger: And all we need is just to say yes and lean in. And that is what he's inviting us to. And if we have not had these kinds of relationships and sisterhood, he's redeeming them, he's restoring them. But he also provides them because he's a God of abundance. So, yeah.

Heather Khym: I could just imagine, like, what a great small group discussion would be is to ask and hear back from those types of questions of like, yeah, like what are you needing right now in this season of life and how can I bless you? Like, how can I come alongside you? Or how can I champion you? Like, what are you needing from me specifically? Like for a small group of women who might be journeying together to be able to ask those questions of one another and just know, because different people have different gifts to offer each person in every season. And maybe we don't feel the permission to ask for it, or maybe we don't know how to offer, you know, to come alongside someone.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh, that's so good.

Heather Khym: So that would be a great one.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And maybe if you could be any age, what age would you be?

Michelle Benzinger: What age would you be? So there you go.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: That's a great way of thinking of it. Yeah, we've talked about so many different aspects this section on daughter and sister, as well, about looking at our hearts, about being the kind of person, transforming over time to the kind of person that we want to be. And we talked about areas of being very honest where we've wounded other people and just allowing the Lord to come and heal us. And I'm wondering if it's okay, maybe we could just spend some time with the Lord? Would that be all right? And just see if the Holy Spirit would like to lead us through a bit of a healing meditation, just maybe with a particular sister in our life?

Michelle Benzinger: What age would we be?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I don't know, girl, the Holy Spirit's gonna tell you. And you might be like, not that age. He's like, oh yes, I love you.

Michelle Benzinger: There you go.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So Father Jacques Philippe, this book was my one thing a few months ago, but it's a book on the priesthood called Priestly Fatherhood. But he talks about the Father and then he talks about what happens when we're fatherless and how it affects our relationships. And so I'm just going to kind of read a bit and, you know, 'cause all of us are the daughter, all of us in our journeys have been the prodigal daughter, but I think all of us in our journeys have also been the older daughter, right. We're the older daughter who never went home, who did the right thing, who took care of mom and dad, who was, you know, all the things. And we can in both areas of our hearts have places where we don't feel like we are fathered. We don't feel like we're cared for. And when we can receive the love of the Father in our hearts there, that it helps us give grace and compassion because it's the Father that unites us. You know, the older son says, this son of yours, he doesn't say my brother. And so many of us are like, that daughter of yours, and he's like, no, that's your sister. So I'm like wondering, just to kind of see

where the Holy Spirit might wanna lead us and just to allow your heart to feel whatever it feels. And we'll just ask Jesus to, just to lead us and guide us during this time a little bit, maybe do a bit of a forgiveness meditation and kind of, does that sound good?

Michelle Benzinger: Sounds lovely.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Okay. All right, so let's do that. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, we come before you today and we thank you for the gift of sisters. We thank you for the gift of friends in our life, of women in our life. Jesus, we ask that you would cover us with your precious blood, that you would lead us and guide us during this time. I'd just like to invite you to, just to call to mind wherever you are in your life right now. Do you feel close to others? Do you feel far away? And if there's a particular woman in your life that might come to mind, maybe somebody that's a struggle or somebody that's been a painful relationship, and it might be someone you haven't thought about in a long time. But let's just ask the Holy Spirit just to reveal to our hearts if there's a particular woman in our life, or who has been in our life, that the Lord might want to heal in those places. We just ask you Father, that you would open our hearts in this place. Because you are always welcoming us back home. And we know the story, dear sisters, most of us very deeply, the story that Jesus tells, of the prodigal son, who asked his father for his inheritance and went off and squandered it. And we know the story that there's an older son as well, who didn't leave, but his heart was bitter and hard. And in that story, it's a father who went for both of them. So I'm just going to just invite you to imagine, I'm gonna read a bit of Father Jacques Philippe here, and just his heart for us here. And I just want you to notice what happens in your own heart. He says, we all know the unexpected ending of this story. The father sees his son arriving from afar and sees with pity for him. He runs to cover him with kisses and without giving him time for the prepared speech, the father orders the servants quickly, quickly bring him suitable clothing, not just any clothing, but the most beautiful. Put a ring on his finger, a sign of regained dignity. Put sandals on his feet and prepare for him a big party complete with fat veal, music, and dancing. But then he says this, let's take up the story again, but this time let's eliminate the father figure. And when the son comes back home, there is nobody. The house is empty, hopelessly empty and abandoned. Only the wind beats against the doors and the windows. There's nobody to welcome him. No one to pardon him. No one to love him. No one to tell him, and I'm gonna change this to be toward women. No one to tell her, in spite of what you've done, in spite of your errors and your sin, you remain my well loved daughter and you can regain your full dignity. You have a place here. You can be free and happy in the house of your father, the house which is also your house, because everything I have is yours. And I just want to invite you to notice in your

heart the difference between having a father who loves you and experiencing that lack. And I'm just going to invite you just to imagine sitting down at the table at the house of the father, a beautiful table, and it's by a warm fireplace and it's your favorite food. And sitting right next to you is your Father, God, the Father who sees you, who loves you, who knows you. And who looks to you and says, I'm so glad you're here, my daughter, you are so beautiful. And you belong here. And I know you. And if it's okay with you, my dear sisters, I'm just going to invite you to invite that woman that's in your heart right now to sit next to you at the table, if it feels safe enough. And what is it like in your heart to even have her sit next to you or across from you at the table? But the Father is there. We have a Father who loves us deeply and who desires to heal our hearts. And in the presence of this loving Father, I just want to invite you, if there's anything in your heart that you want to say to this sister, what would you like to say to her? And maybe it's finally being honest in a way she's hurt you or a way you've hurt her. But what would you like to say to her in this safe place with a Father who knows your heart so deeply? And just allow whatever's happening in your heart to happen. And I just ask you, Lord, right now for each one of us, what do you want us to know? What is the truth you want us to know about how you love us right here in our hearts? And what do you want us to know about that other person, that sister that's here too? What do you want us to know about her? What is the truth? And I just ask you, my dear sisters, I just pray, would you be willing to surrender that sister and your life to the Lord today? Just maybe one small step, but could you surrender her to the Lord today and ask the Lord to take care of her and to take care of your own heart as well? Father, we thank you. We thank you for rooting us and grounding us in your love. And I just ask a special blessing upon all those who are with us today and all the people that have come to our mind, Lord, whether they are living or deceased, they are alive before you, and we ask Lord that you would bless them, that you would heal our hearts, Lord. That you would break the strongholds, any strongholds of hatred or unforgiveness or self hatred or anything in our life that might be mitigating against us loving you and loving others well. We ask your precious blood, Lord Jesus, to free us, redeem us, and bring us home to your Father's house. And we make this prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Heather Khym: Thank you, Sister.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: You're very welcome. We will see what continues to unfold.

Michelle Benzinger: Amen. Yeah, thank you. That was beautiful.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, this is so good. I've recommended this book before too, but just like, even in my own heart, as I read it, like the difference between a warm fireplace and a set table versus like, there's nobody home.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh my gosh. That's such a.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And you're left to figure it out by yourself, you know. And how can we figure this out if we don't receive this? Like, it's so hard, you know.

Heather Khym: That's really good.

Michelle Benzinger: That was so good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well dears, that concludes our part four series, four part series, that too, on sisterhood so far, yeah.

Heather Khym: Yeah. We're about to start another one.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: We are about to start another one.

Heather Khym: Next week.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yes we are, yeah. We're just all the good things. Well, should we talk about our one things for the week? Michelle, would you like to talk about your one thing?

Michelle Benzinger: Yes. For my one things I put together a list, that will be in our show notes, of a couple of my favorite sisterhood movies to watch for a little fun movie night.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh, that's fun, yeah.

Michelle Benzinger: tYou know, so, there you go. You know, a little movie night, popcorn, chocolate. There you go.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Maybe some tears, that'd be great.

Michelle Benzinger: Little tears. Laughter through tears, my favorite emotion. Okay.

Heather Khym: My one thing is a playlist that I made called God is Love.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: What?

Heather Khym: And I made it just, it reminded me of a conversation. You guys were there, and we were driving in a car and Debbie Herbeck was there and she just said, one time, you know, like just talking about people falling away from the church and whatever. And she said, I just feel like right now, like we just need to make a commitment that we're not leaving like that, that we're gonna be with them until the end. And I was like so, just like, she just came out with this, you know, like she had this response. And I was like, yeah, this is so true. Anyway, so that's what kind of inspired this playlist. Like for those who have been journeying with the Lord for a while and, yeah, through all the seasons and stuff like that. So yeah, it'll be in the show notes. I hope you guys enjoy it.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Awesome. Well mine's also a song too and it's a song that randomly came up on my Spotify playlist, but it's called Ashes to Skies. Have you guys heard that one by Shaylee Simeone? And I love one of the lyrics that caught my heart, she says this, oh, what a gracious Father, you made these ruins an altar. Only grace could build cathedrals out of bones that have been raised. Your honor pouring into this vessel made of clay. For your glory we will rise from the ashes to the skies. For your glory we will rise from the ashes to the skies.

Michelle Benzinger: That's a good lyric.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, it's a great one, so I just thought of that. We talked about rising and then here we go, so.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, there we go.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: All right friends, well thank you so much for joining us. We will continue our series on the identity of mother and bride in season 11. So you're just gonna have to sit with daughter and sister for awhile, which I think is a great thing to do. And we're gonna start a four-part series on Advent, like we usually do, but this time you can see us. So thank you so much for joining us. Yeah. It's been a delight to be with you and until next time, we will be abiding together. God bless you. See you.

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