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**Project Zion Podcast**

**Josh Mangelson** 00:17

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

**Karin Peter** 00:33

Welcome to Project Zion Podcast. We are eight episodes into our He'brew series exploring the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures. Today, however, is our first She'brew episode, in that we're looking at passages in the Old Testament that focus on women. As always, we will engage in our pattern of explanation, exploration and experiencing the text to help us better navigate what we are reading. Our guides through the Old Testament are Tony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith, and I'm your host, Karin Peter. Hi, Tony and Charmaine.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 01:14

Hello, Karen, how are you?

**Karin Peter** 01:16

I'm looking forward to this so, I'm doing okay.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 01:20

**Karin Peter** 01:20

So, if our listeners will recall, as we have gone through the episodes that we've done on the Old Testament so far, I tend to get a little bit indignant about the portrayal of women in some of the Old Testament passages that we've looked at. So, today gives us the opportunity to dig into that. And hopefully, you can help me navigate through some of that response that I have to some of those texts, because I'm sure I'm not the only one. So, let's delve in to our first She'brew episode.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 02:01

Sure. And we can say that we both regularly react to text. You know, a text comes up in the lectionary and one or both of us are looking at it to get ready for a sermon or something. It's like, "Oh, I don't want to deal with that text right now." So, we quite understand the reaction. There's plenty to react to in the Hebrew Bible and also plenty to learn from it. So, we hope today we can shed some light on certain aspects of gender injustice in the Hebrew Bible.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 02:35

Yeah. And I think the reality is, the fact that those questions, those stories are there and that we have those kinds of questions means that two things, at least. One is, we're seeing the writers of these books more clearly. We're seeing something of their worldview. And for Hebrew scripture writers, most of them in a very patriarchal, male oriented culture, and they're, that's the point of view they're gonna write from. But they're also going to be writing from an ancient point of view, where certain kinds of

understandings of men and women, roles, even physiology, is very established. And everyone just assumes some things. So, we're going to get to see those things. Then the, a third thing that our discomfort reminds us of is that there are some stories in here about the abuse of women, the misuse of women, that even the passage sees as a misuse or an abuse of women, which lends the reminder that there's some honesty here, too. There's some honesty about how awful some of the things seeing, thought, done to women are, and it's validating that this is not okay. So, there's all kinds of sides here to look at it from so.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 04:18

We hope people begin to see that the issues are actually complex, especially since we're trying to bridge a culture of over 3000 years ago, right? And so, that's going to be complex. It's complex enough bridging cultures today that are different, but imagine we step back to 1000 BCE or 500 BCE to the Near East. We've got, there's lots of intellectual, social, spiritual, psychological, social-psychological distance between us and then, and we need to just acknowledge that upfront. So, yeah.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 04:58

And all of this points back to the idea that God did not write the Bible, that people wrote the Bible. And what we're hoping to do is help people understand where some of those writings come from, that comes from these ancient people's understanding of who God is or how God is at work in their lives, which maybe, well, actually is, very, very different than how, at least I, understand who God is and how God works in the world. But what we're hoping is that we can help people find some ways to connect with scripture anyhow, and perhaps see something of the God that these writers are trying to point to, with the best of their understanding and words too, so, just what we're trying to do.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 05:47

Yeah.

**Karin Peter** 05:48

Lots to talk about.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 05:54

So, She'brew, contemplating the stories of women in the Hebrew Scriptures. And I think one of the things that we first want to say is that sometimes people forget how many there are and how many of them are quite ancient. Tony was just reminding me this morning that the oldest, that what historians and scholars of the Bible have identified as the oldest pieces in the Bible, are the song of Miriam, which happens after, is part of the Exodus after coming through the sea. And the song of Deborah, which we will make some reference to today. Those are the oldest snippets. Those are those that can be identified.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 06:47

In other words, you can identify the Hebrew in those two texts as extremely archaic, more archaic than the Hebrew around it. So, it's pretty, it's not, wouldn't be commonly known that these two oldest pieces of poetry, oldest texts in the Hebrew Bible, are attributed to women. That's pretty important to know

right up front. So, women's voices are not silent in the Hebrew Bible, but they are often silenced by the editors, and silenced by us as readers, and that's something we need to deal with.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 07:20**

So, questions that we need to ask: how should we read and use texts about women that come from a patriarchal society in which we already know women are seen as less than men? That's part of the time and the way they saw things. And then, can we even glimpse how God sees women in books written by men who are blind to the inequity? So, those are some of the underlying questions that we may not be answering overtly, but they're the ones that are hopefully a, holding our unease about some of the stories of women. And so, where we think we need to start is with some terms.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 08:07**

Yeah. So, some basic terminology to get us going. First of all, the term hermeneutics; hermeneutics comes from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which means to interpret, but in philosophy and theology, hermeneutics is interpretation theory. What is our theory or model of interpretation? And we'll explore this briefly in a few minutes, but, you know, it's about how we read texts, and also about how texts read us. We'll come back to that in a few minutes. Hermeneutics has to do with the theory that's in our head, either implicitly or explicitly, about what we will do when we come to a written text. Everybody has some kind of hermeneutic, some kind of interpretative theory by which they read things. The question is, is it a good theory? Is it a thought out theory? Is it a unself-reflective theory? A professor of mine once said, "If God gave us the Bible, God failed to give us an owner's manual." And so, what that means then, is that we, as readers, have to create our owner's manual. This is how we will read and use these texts for people in Community of Christ that, that's in front of a document called scripture in Community of Christ, which gives us, kind of, our hermeneutical rules for approaching scripture. And if someone wants ever to say, "Well, I don't need hermeneutics. I just read the text and just take it at face value." It's like, oh, no, no, no, no. No, there's no taking anything at face value. You've already got things going on in your head that are like lenses by which you see things and this is one of the reasons why women's voices and roles in the Bible have been so often missed, obscured, obliterated, ignored. It's because the things that shape people in the culture, may very well diminish women's voices. And so, that's already playing in your head when you go to read a text from the Hebrew Bible. So, hermeneutics is really important. And then, related to that would be; what is a feminist hermeneutic? Well, there are many feminist hermeneutics but a feminist hermeneutic is a theory of interpretation that wants to take women's experience and understanding seriously, to lift it up as a lens by which we will interpret texts. And so, that's one of the things we're going to be actually practicing today. We're going to be using feminist hermeneutics to look at these texts, to help, you know, as a theory of interpretation, to lift up things we might not otherwise see in the texts, right? So, contextualization then, well, contextualization is this; a text without a context is a pretext, right? So, context means, that which accompanies, comes with; *con* (in Latin- comes with) the text. History, culture, assumptions, language, it's all part of the context of any given text. And there's not only the context of the passage, there's the context of the reader, right? So, my context, and the context of the text, are like two horizons that we have to somehow bridge. That's why a feminist hermeneutic is really important, because it helps us reframe our own context so we can ask different kinds of questions and look for different kinds of things in the passage. There was, any attempt to read a biblical passage without either paying attention to literary or historical context, is, in my view, it's doomed to create mis-readings of the text and then misuse of

people with the text. And then, the third term is patriarchy. Two Greek words: patriarkhia, which means the rule of the fathers. That sounds bad, doesn't it. So, patriarchy refers to cis-male dominated systems that becomes, sort of, the, you know, the canopy, the structure, the symbolic world that everybody has to function in. And it's just very important to say that the Hebrew Bible, the books of the Hebrew Bible, were composed, created, brought together in a patriarchal system, inside of a patriarchal system, where it was assumed, generally, that men had this value, and women had this value, and that there were all of these established ways things were that determined, you know, who was on first and who was on second.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 13:02**

Who had the power and who has to be subservient.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 13:06**

So, we have to simply acknowledge that patriarchy is part of the culture, the cultural framework that helped create the Bible.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 13:17**

For, it was resident for all of the writers of the Bible, Old and New Testament.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 13:24**

And so, we also have to be careful too that we don't somehow get smug about this because we have our own archias, our own ruling systems that we're very unaware of that control the way we look at reality.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 13:37**

And that are based on patriarchal structures and hierarchies. And there's, we don't have to look very far in our culture, to see how present they are. For instance, the practice of women changing their names to their husband's last name when they're married. That's all part of hierarchy. The idea of women being given away on their wedding day, property, from their father, to their husband. These are all built in and we may not even recognize them at times, but they're under the surface, creating all kinds of expectations and values of people.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 14:18**

So, yeah, so, we just have to be careful not to be, as we deal with ancient texts that are obviously patriarchal, we have to be very, very self-reflective about all the ways patriarchy is still at work in our lives and social systems, and it has not been dealt with yet. So, let's try to be generous as we approach these texts.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 14:41**

So, one of the things that we're going to, some of things we've been saying thus far, we've said in other of our podcasts, about Hebrew Scriptures, but we wanted to give a little bit more specific terms to. This next part is something we haven't been as intentional about, and Tony's already mentioned it, about part of the definition of hermeneutics is how does the text read us? And so, this is, also goes back to what we were talking about earlier about how some of these texts just, like, make us angry and furious,

because it's, like, because for some of us there's probably still a little bit of an idea that somehow God wrote scripture and this, and the way things are in the Bible is the way they are supposed to be. And so, it's, like, all of who we are just wants to go, "No, this is not right." But anyhow, so. But we do need to recognize that when we read a text, that the things that are happening in us, as we read it, are worth noting as well. These are also places of learning. These are also places of going deeper spiritually, and emotionally, actually, and inviting God to be part of that too. So, be attentive to what stirs in you, what the text stirs in you. So, in using scripture, we ask not only how will we read the text, but how will the, that how will we let the text read us? And so, something that's really helpful is cultivating this attentiveness to our own flashpoints, those places where it's, like, a feeling surfaces on, unbidden by a passage, and by a passage or an idea that is resident in the scripture. So, we need to be, to take the time to say, what is it that's making me angry, and why? What creates this revulsion in me? How does that revulsion, anger, or fear function in my life? And so, this is a chance to look at our life in general, not just in relation to this passage. So, it gives us this moment of reflection. How does it, whatever the feeling might be, impact my relationship with God and others? And I think this is really an important question to ask ourselves when scripture has been used against us and been, and that the words have been put into God's mouths, with God's mouth as judgment on us. It's really important then as we're encountering scriptures, or being encountered by scriptures, to take that time to say, "Wait. What am I, what do I know about myself?" And, "Why am I?" You know, it's the fact that we're reacting means there's part of us that's saying, "No, God isn't like this." And so, pay attention to the wisdom within you that knows that this is not like the God that you worship. How is it, how's it impacting your relationship with God? And sometimes people get angry at God when they read scripture, which is, it makes sense in a way, but it does also draw our attention back to the fact that we may be buying into that inaccuracy that God wrote scriptures. And so, it's, like, that's another place to remind us, "No, no, these are people who wrote these. Does it keep me from practicing critical empathy towards the text I'm reading?" And, you want to give it, briefly?...I got it once or twice before."

**Tony Chvala-Smith 18:30**

Yeah, sure, critical... I love the concept of critical empathy. I learned it from historian David Howlett, and it's something we had always taught students to practice, we just didn't have a term for it. Critical empathy is the ability to use rational thought as we approach a historical topic, a theological topic, in this case, a sacred text. Critical means being able to form rational judgments about. Empathy means being open to the humanity of the authors, that is, that the writers of scripture lived in cultures remote from us. Some of the stories we'll consider today were stories that emerged from the Bronze Age, for goodness sakes, right? And so, we cannot expect the authors or characters in scripture to have what we consider our best ethics. They had the ethics they were able to have in that period. And critical empathy then, is a way we can say, "Yeah, I understand that this text comes from a time and a place that's different from mine. I want to understand it and I want to be compassionate towards the figures who are in it, recognizing that their realities are not like mine, or in some cases are like mine." And so, it's a way of creating a proper distance from the text, at the same time recognizing the shared humanity we have with the characters in the text.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 20:09**

And perhaps the author as well.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 20:11**

And the author as well.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 20:12**

And then how can I let the Holy Spirit, the illuminating wisdom of God, into my reactions and interactions, not only with this text, but with whatever the text has stirred awake in me. And in this way, our encounter with scripture can be a point of growth, and not just a point of frustration or woundedness. And, but we say that recognizing that's not an easy thing to do, is just to say, "Oh, yeah, I've said the words and now I understand and now all the feelings will go away." We understand that that is part of the hard work.

**Karin Peter 20:51**

So, there's an importance to understanding the critical empathy as a rational way of looking at scripture. We understand context. We understand that it was, you know, Bronze Age, all that, kind of, rational thought can be present and still, there can be the impact of not, I think, for a lot of people, they don't confuse this as, "God wrote this, and so, that's how God feels about women." I think there's a lot of people that do feel that way. But there's a lot of people that, "No, that's not how we look at scripture," but still have a sense of it, the word I used earlier was indignation, not because I think God wrote this and has a lesser care for women, but rather at the way these texts have been used or glossed over, or even in some, romanticized, to diminish what's being said about the role and of women in this time. And it has caused us to not be able to look critically at the text...

**Tony Chvala-Smith 22:01**

Right.

**Karin Peter 20:01**

...to see what's really being said. And so, for some people, that's where the anger comes in.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 22:07**

Right. It's about the people who abused them with this text, yes.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 22:13**

There is a proper place in our spirituality and in our use of texts for prophetic outrage, right? Prophetic outrage is the out, the outrage of the Amoses and the Isaiahs and Hoseas and so on, at the abuse of people with religious ideas, with political ideas, with economic ideas, with perversions of justice, and so on. That's why in the prophets, justice (mishpat in Hebrew) is like the central virtue, right, that needs to be cultivated. So yeah, there's a proper place for outrage. That's a prophetic response to a situation in which we see injustice being perpetrated.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 23:03**

And for those who find defiance surfacing for them, this is a place where noticing and naming what the defiance is can help. Because this is a defiance against what, how the scripture was used, rather than a

defiance against the writing. And the best way to win for people, against people who misuse the Bible, is to read the Bible for yourself. And, I say again, that's not always easy. But it is, for those of us who want to fight with defiance, that's a way of doing it. So, and we've already said this down below, but remember, these weren't written for us, or by us, in our time. These texts are not a divine fax to us as if God wrote them, no matter what anyone says. They are human products fashioned out of human experience with the divine, but culturally conditioned and shaped by ancient, often archaic worldviews. Nevertheless, God was at work then and there too, even as God is at work here. And so, this encounter with scripture, this walk with scripture, and how do we work with it, how do we let it speak, is this long, slow, sometimes painful, sometimes exhilarating, and life-giving process in which shalom can have new meaning and new depth. So, alright. So, where we want to go next is to, so, that's explaining a little bit about how we're going to approach this. Next, we're going to talk about the explore, and Karin, this is where we will continue to invite you to share your questions because you're attuned to, I think, what people want to hear. We're going to be looking at different groupings of women, and so the first group is going to be Michal, Tamar and Bathsheba. And so, these are women around David. Michal and Bathsheba are two of David's wives and Tamar is one of his daughters. And then, the question that we'll try to address there is, what do their stories tell us concerning women's reality, realities during the monarchy? And we've talked, you know, about David and Bathsheba already in a previous one, but this is a time when David is the second king. So, the monarchy is becoming established. It's a particular kind of hierarchy. It's a particular kind of patriarchy. There aren't women queens within the Israelites story. The king, it's all kings. So, that's already telling us something about patriarchy. There's this sense that the monarchy is something passed from one generation to the next, to the next, to the next, to the sons. This is, you know, huge. So, this is a place and a time in Israelite history when patriarchy is the framework from which they're working. And we'll note that some of the stories that come before have women in a much wider variety of roles than in this very patriarchal structure that the monarchy imposes within Israel.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 26:55**

One of the things you can notice in the, we'll call them the historical narratives, but we're using the term "historical" advisedly, Samuel and Kings two, 1 and 2 Samuel, our English Bibles 1 and 2 Kings in our English Bibles. But those are each one book in the Hebrew Bible. Those narratives are compiled of court records of all kinds of material, all kinds of sources. And they're reasonably historical, and yet, they're very much edited pieces. They reflect the worldview of the editors of those texts. But one of the things that you can tell in those narratives is this, that once there's a monarchy, women become, kind of, movable pawn pieces in the way you cement alliances and relationships. And so, Mi'chal or Mi chal' is Saul's daughter, and she becomes one of David's wives, but then, there's the scene where David dances, we'll say, David dances in an exposed fashion in front of the ark because he's just so excited.

**Karin Peter 28:08**

Naked.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 28:10**

Yeah. And Michal, with whom he already is in, kind of, a tense relationship, sees this and is, like, is disgusted by it, and she, the text says "Despises him in her heart." David essentially keeps Michal in his

harem, but just simply stops having any kind of a relationship with her. So, she's marginalized and she has no recourse.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 28:35**

Well, and to remember the earlier part of the story, she's taken away from her husband who...

**Karin Peter 28:40**

Whom she loved and he loved her.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 28:343**

Yeah, and he's devastated and it becomes almost, like, for David, this matter of pride, of saying, "I took her back. She's mine, and no matter whether this is good for her or not, now she will be part of, you know, this will be part of my, the sign that I am both the inheritor of Saul and the bettering of Saul's kingdom, that I will..." So, that was part of why he felt he needed to keep her as one of his wives, though they were very much estranged from each other.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 29:23**

So, this is a place where when we're reading these texts, we can see very much how patriarchy at work in an ancient, the ancient Israelite monarchy, has turned women who, in some cases earlier in Israel's story, had greater freedom, but now has turned women into, you know, these pieces on a chessboard in a royal game. And then, Tamar, there's two Tamars we'll talk about today. This Tamar is, that, Tamar that Charmaine just mentioned, related to Michal and Bathsheba, this is David's daughter, and her half-brother...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 30:02**

Amnon.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 30:03**

...Amnon rapes her. And it's a, you know, it disgraces her. But then Tamar's brother, Absalom, one of David's sons is so disgusted by this, he essentially, he eventually sets up a situation where he murders Amnon. And so, in other words, this part of 2 Samuel from chapter 13 on, it's the best or worst soap opera you will ever read. But in other words, the, there's the abuse of, starts off with the abuse of a woman.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 30:39**

And it's fairly explicit, you know. She's saying, "No, this is going to dishonor you. It's going to dishonor me. We can do this the right way, just turn down your lust. You know, turn down what you want, and let's talk about this. But no, he insists. And so, I mean, it's very clear that there, she was not willing in any way for this to be the way that they interact with each other. But one of the interesting things is that, because it's, much of the story of David is written like a soap opera, the ongoing theme is that this act had negative consequences for generations. And so, though it's talked about, and actually one of the people, one of the brothers says, "Oh, you know, don't take this to heart." You know, this is after she's been raped, and she's going to her brother and saying, "Oh, my gosh, this is what has happened." The, "Oh, don't take it to heart," at which, wow, that sounds exact-



**Karin Peter** 31:55

Horrible.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 30:56

Yeah, and exactly what happens today when employers abuse, harass women to be in some kind of a sexual relationship with them, as a matter of either maintaining their job, or whatever, progressing in their job. So, this is not different. This is so much the same. And then being told, "Well, you got what you wanted. Why are you even complaining?" So, but that's right here, but...

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 32:27

And David refuses to discipline Amnon. He doesn't do anything. Amnon is the crown prince, the heir apparent. And so, David's like, "No, this is really bad, but I'm not going to do anything." It's like, Alright, so, male entitlement is already present, and it's clearly present in the text too. Sorry, I kind of

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 32:45

Oh, no, no, that's fine. But it's a lot going on.

**Karin Peter** 32:49

But doesn't that then, I mean, if we take a step back from the horror of the story, from what's happening, and just look at that piece of it, that, the Michal story tells us a lot about David's character. This story tells us a lot about David's character, as do the rest of the pieces of this where women are involved in it, that we overlook, do we not, as we read the story of David?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 33:20

Right, and also here's a way to see what's going on. That editors of the book of Samuel are Deuteronomistic theologians, and they, what they're trying to show, in some respects, is that David's dynasty got started with a rape and a murder and the divine judgment on David is, that that continues in his family. We might rather see it as the problem of multi-generational sexual abuse and violence. That is, it's passed, you know. We see it differently from how those ancient author editors, they saw it as, you know, God's action, but...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 34:04

Right. And I, go back to what you said is that we tend to overlook all these things about David, but I want to take us back to the text and say, but it's here. The authors are not trying to hide the very humanness of David. In fact, the humanness of David is what helps this author describe who God is, that God sees us beyond our mistakes, beyond the very humanness of the things that we do and say. So, I think it's really a shame that people aren't reading this more closely, because we have this idea of all these heroes from the past who had such strong faith and did everything right, and if we could just emulate them. It's like, no, don't try this at home, you know.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 35:00

David as moral exemplar. David, you're never coming to a youth camp we run. I'm sorry, but...

**Karin Peter** 35:05

There's no work, youth worker registration happening here.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 35:10

Well, I think there's, the difference between what is here, and what the author has intentionally included, and how people tend to read scripture. And that's part of, you know, when we can let the characters and the authors be human, then we're getting a whole lot more about the story of their relationship with God than if we think they're these perfect people that we should be like. So, it's part, it's two sides of it here. So.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 35:40

And, if I can borrow the title of Barbara Tuchman's great book about, actually, it's about the bubonic plague in the 14th century. Her book was titled, *A Distant Mirror*, and it's a great term to describe what's going on in this text. This text is a distant mirror of our own Me Too Movement. This is our reality. This is our social reality. And so, across, you know, all of these hundreds and hundreds of years back to the Iron Age to an Iron Age monarchy, women are being abused in ways we actually recognize. And so, the text then can, kind of, hold up in front of us, *us*, right? It holds up our gender injustice, questions and issues. So.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 36:30

And depending on how you read this, you can say that one of the themes coming through this for the author is that there is a reckoning for these kinds of behaviors. And that's, I would say, what the Me Too Movement is all about. There are reckonings for people thinking that this is okay. This is an okay way to treat women. And it's, and if you read it, it's here in the text, that this has lasting consequences that will tear families apart. And that's the David's story, that it will create woundedness. It will create division, yeah, hurts that, if not attended to, will not heal of their own. And that's part of the David's story, too, is that David wants things to be easy. He wants them to be, you know, and so he know, ignores a lot of the things that should have been said, dealt with. I mean, he doesn't acknowledge what happened with Bathsheba till Nathan comes and says, "Ha ha, God sees and you've messed up." And so, yeah, we do get to see a lot about David. He's relying on the patriarchy of his society to carry him through without having to feel like he is responsible for anything or needs to fix anything. And those are some of the lasting wrongs that come from patriarchy.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 38:07

You can see in some of these stories, you can also see little acts of resistance. So, when Michal "despises David in her heart," she's actually stepping outside of her social expected role as the king's, one of the king's wives to say, "This guy's a creep," right? And so, some, that may be sometimes the only thing someone can do is to call out or to say, "You are not what you appear to be." Bathsheba, on the other, Bathsheba is, oh, I'm sorry, you were going to...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 38:43

Yeah, I'm just gonna jump in to put in Tamar first since we've got all three of these.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 38:47**

Sure.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 38:47**

Tamar does not take this on as her fault. She lets others know what was done to her. And, you know, and in a culture where shame would be, just as it is today, placed on women because they're not pure or virginal. And that, that's all, that all happens in this story, where, you know, she'd gone to bring food to Amnon and wearing one of the robes that was within the household, the robes that virgins wore, virgins, meaning here unmarried women. And as she leaves there, she's cast out from his bedroom and she rips this rope. Very, a very public sign that something has been done to her. This is not her fault. She did what she could, and before and after, and claims her rights, her, the harm that's been done to her, to those closest to her. So, there's that, kind of, a resistance too, not just quietly letting men do what they will do.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 40:15**

And then finally, you know Bathsheba, you have to read the story very carefully. You can see little acts of resistance on her part. I mean once, once she is pulled into their David's harem and becomes, you know, one of his wives, she is going to secure for her son, Solomon, what, everything she can. And so, she uses Nathan the prophet, she relies on Nathan the prophet, who's the one who called David out in the first place. She makes, she seems to have a kind of an alliance with him, and he seems to be a supporter of her. So, she makes the best of the situation, trying to secure whatever she, whatever kind of future she can for her, for what will be her children. So, there are forms of resistance going on in the text, even though the, in the cultural setting, the legal capacity for women to do anything more is severely, severely curtailed. So, resistance matters. It's certainly less than one would like here, but in these texts, but...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 41:19**

But today, that is the case, too. I mean.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 41:21**

Yeah, So, let's go to that next group. This is a group that you brought up for us, Karen. This is the other...

**Karin Peter 41:31**

This is my favorite group.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 41:34**

This is the other Tamar. This Tamar here is the Tamar in Genesis chapter 38. And then...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 41:40**

And the reason we're bringing these up is that they show up in a very surprising place. They show up in the New Testament, of all places, and they are in the genealogy that we find in the Gospel of Matthew.

So, there's a whole bunch of layers here of surprise, I guess. The first is, typically women weren't included in genealogies, and here in Jesus' genealogy there are four women and they are not the driven, you know, pure as the driven snow kind of women. They have very interesting stories, but they all seem, by the author of Matthew, as women who are important in Israel's saga. And so, it's just fascinating. Three of these four women are not Israelites. So, they're not insiders. These are outsiders.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 42:53

And maybe they don't even have green cards as far...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 42:57

I'm sure not. I'm sure not. So, we want to just explore these four women and say; What is the author of Matthew trying to say about Israel, the history of Israel, about Jesus, and maybe even about what really matters in a relationship with God?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 43:25

So, Tamar is the daughter-in-law of Judah. This is a story in Genesis 38. It's another soap opera-ish kind of story in Genesis but Tamar's husband, who's Judah's son, dies. The text strangely says that the Lord put him to death because he was wicked. What that means is, kind of, peculiar.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 43:51

I'm hoping it, it's because the Lord put him to death because he was a wife abuser. But anyhow, that's a whole 'nother view of God that we have to unpack in some other place.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 43:59

So, by that, by Judah's son, Er, she had not had children. And then the next brother, Onan, is supposed to raise up children for the deceased brother through Tamar, but...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 44:18

Basically, taking her as a second or third, or whatever, wife,

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 44:23

But he does, he doesn't properly use his sexuality to do that. That's the...

**Karin Peter** 44:30

Oh, for heaven's sakes, Tony, just spit it out.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 44:33

Well yeah, the text says that whenever Onan would have sex with Tamar, he would "Spill his semen on the ground." So, you know, coitis-,

**Karin Peter** 44:45

He didn't want to sire children.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 44:46**

Right.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 44:46**

By her.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 44:47**

Right.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 44:48**

Because it would mess up the future inheritances of his own children and la, la, la, la.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 44:54**

So, Tamar is in a really rough situation. She has no children. She's a daughter-in-law widow. And so, she decides to dress up as a prostitute, sit at the gate of the city, and she tricks her father-in-law into having sex with her, and wisely keeps some, kind of, little emblem from him so that when the child is, when a child is finally born, she can say, this is, like, the 1-800-Who's the Father? It's a little emblem of Judah's that only he had. And so, that's Tamar, or she's deserted but she, she's gonna find justice for her in the way the culture could practice justice, right? She's gonna have a child that will be a legitimate heir of Judah. So, that's Tamar. And she's mentioned in his genealogy.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 45:50**

Which is, she needs. Remember this is a culture where first, women's value is determined by how many children they have, and especially how many boys, but this is also your Social Security. This is how, if you're going to get old, you need somebody to take care of you, and especially if you're a woman where you can't typically work, not necessarily own property. And so, you have, this is how you survive, is by making sure that you are connected to a family in some way. So really, really important. And so, she's, she is one of the women who are mentioned.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 46:37**

Yeah, so, Rahab is from the story of the taking of the city of Jericho in the book of Joshua. She's Canaanite. She's a prostitute. There's no sense in the text that she's married, no sense that she has children, but she has some kind of extended household connected to her house and two Israelite spies spend a little time at Rahab's house. It...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 47:01**

And it sounds like most, lots of visitors to the city stop off at Rahab's house,

**Tony Chvala-Smith 47:06**

Right. It appears to be a high traffic area and so, but she makes a covenant, forces them to make a covenant with her. She says, "Hey, we know, we're watching what Yahweh's doing for you guys and I want you to promise me that when you take the city, everybody in my house will be saved and protected. And so..."

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 47:32**

Because of the way that she's protected the spies...

**Tony Chvala-Smith 47:35**

Right.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 47:35**

...from being discovered.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 47:36**

I protected you, you're now going to protect me. And so, it's a fascinating story. Interestingly, Rahab, the canine prostitute, is a woman who gets mentioned in the Book of Joshua. And so, that's pretty important to, this is an important figure in Israel's memory to have been named like that. And so, she holds the Israelites to their promise and she in her extended household then are Canaanites who essentially believe in Israel's God and are allowed to live in the land afterwards. So, that's pretty important. That's in Jesus's family tree. And then Ruth is in Jesus' family tree. Ruth is a Moabite. And if you take the Old Testament as a whole, the Israelites and the Moabites, uh-uh, did not like each other, though they're ethnically related and ancient Moabite is very similar to ancient Hebrew. And so, Naomi, Ruth is Naomi's daughter-in-law. We know a little short story of Ruth and when Naomi's husband dies, and when her two daughter, her two foreign daughter-in-law's husbands, her sons die, Naomi, Ruth is the one who wants to stay faithful to Ruth and, to Naomi and go back to, go with her back to Bethlehem where she's from. And it's a cool story, what happens in the story of Ruth, because to make a short story even shorter, Ruth, the Moabite, proposes to a next of kin person named Boaz so she can claim her place in the family and...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 49:28**

With some coaching from her mother-in-law on how to do this. So.

**Karin Peter 49:32**

Coaching is a very lax term to describe what actually happened. But yeah,

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 49:38**

So, I might have been you, Karin, but I've heard people talking about Naomi pimping out.

**Karin Peter 49:44**

Yes, I did refer to it in one of our conversations.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 49:48**

Well, the scene in this short story where Ruth meets Boaz at the threshing floor, is, it's playfully sexual, right? But this is a strong woman character who's going to act for the well-being of her mother-in-law and her future, and who's, like, "I don't care if I'm a Moabite. I believe in your God. There you go." And so, Jesus has another foreigner in his family tree.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 50:22**

And, I don't, did you mention this? Ruth is the great-grandmother of David, the King David, so.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 50:31**

I didn't mention that. So, yeah.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 50:32**

So, that was another part of one of those tie overs into the whole saga of Israel.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 50:39**

And then finally, we've talked about Bathsheba. Bathsheba is identified as the wife of Uriah in the genealogy in Matthew, which is curious. It may be that the author of Matthew, because he knows that Uriah was himself not a native Israelite, assumes that Bathsheba was not a native Israelite, but the name Bathsheba, and the references to her in 2 Samuel indicate she is of Israelite...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 51:05**

Right. She's, her father is a, her father or grandfather is of standing in the temple and was a counselor to David so probably was Hebrew, was Israelite.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 51:21**

So, these women are mentioned in Jesus' genealogy and so, the author of Matthew and his Jewish-Christian readers know their Hebrew Bibles really well because it's the only Bible they've got. There's no New Testament yet, and they know these stories. And, you know, the question is, so why is, why does Matthew include these four women very distinctively in Jesus's gene-, in his genealogy of Jesus? And there's different theories as to why that's the case. But...

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 51:48**

But there's, I mean, we've already been able to see some of the similarities here. They all persevered. They all held to what was just. They all believed in God. They took on the God of Israel as their God, if God, that wasn't already their God. So, there's some of those pieces that we begin to see. But they all have, kind of, you know, sketchy backgrounds, too, if you're looking for purity, and, you know, never, never did anything wrong. So, but then, the other reason, another reason that we can imagine these being used is that right at the end of that genealogy then, we are introduced to Mary who's, her circumstance is quite a questionable circumstance. In her culture, here's this young woman betrothed to someone who suddenly turns up pregnant. What is that about? And so, by naming these four women, the author is saying, God isn't so concerned about some of these things that you all are judging Mary by. Pay attention to what matters to God. And I think that would, so maybe, you know, maybe people in Matthew's time, in the first century, were uncomfortable with some of the story of how Jesus was born too. And so, the author's trying to help them look at why are they uncomfortable, and saying, "But this God has had, has used and supported all kinds of women in the past who would have been rejected or judged by their culture.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 53:53**

I mean, I think it's very profound that the Messiah, in the Messiah's family tree, are women whose stories we can recognize as stories we know too, right? A woman who experienced sexual violence and

manipulation, women who were outsiders who had to try to figure out how they would survive, a, you know, a wom-, three of these women, actually all four of them, are very, very much going to take their own lives under control and do what they need to do to create a better future for themselves. We recognize their stories, and their stories are part of the Messiah story. I think that's pretty, pretty cool for us in a Christian church to talk about. So yeah, pretty cool stuff going on there.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 54:50

So, we're going to then look at this last pair of women in this session. We've talked about, you know, do we need to have another She'Brew, episode, 'cause there's a lot of cool women in the Hebrew scriptures and we don't usually get much time with them. So, but we're gonna be looking at Deborah and Jael, and this is from Judges, chapters four and five. And the way I'm describing it is women chosen to do God's work in culturally unexpected ways.

**Karin Peter** 55:24

Oh, yes.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 55:28

And something I was referring to earlier is that before the monarchy and the Deborah story is, shortly after the Exodus, the people have come into the promised land and after Joshua has led them for a while, then instead of a leader they have these serial leaders when needed, called judges. And so, Deborah is a prophetess. She's a wife. She's a judge. And here, judge has a couple of different meanings. One is...

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 56:14

Yeah, she Charmaine has military leader there. A Shofet in Hebrew is a mil, kind of think of them as a warlord. And then another meaning is an arbitrator. So, there's a there is a kind of justice element. But the, these, these judges in the Spirit of, of Israel's history, performed both functions, and they're, they're essentially raised up by Yahweh for this task, right to arbitrary but also to lead the tribes against their enemies.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 56:41

And another of her roles as a prophetess is speaking for God. Which later in the Israel story, that will be what, what prophets do, but so she's all of these different things. People come to her. They recognize her wisdom and her ability to judge. So, it's not just a name that's given to her that they come for her to arbitrate, issues and conflicts. But she's also a judge in the way of this military leader. She's a singer. The fifth chapter of judges is her and Barak, the leader of the Israelite army, who are singing the story that has what has just happened. And then the other woman is Jael. She's a nomad. She's a Kenite. We first met the Kenites I think in Midian in

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 57:39

They're connected to Moses, his father-in-law, who's a Midianite. So, they're nomadic traders and herders, and



**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 57:46**

so she's a nomad. She has a wife, and she's a hammer wielder. And that wasn't a formal job description would have been necessary as a tent dweller dwelling Nomad, to be able to do that. And that comes in handy, so, so to speak, in the storyline. So just a little bit about the story. So, we'll just kind of go back through the story. Deborah is a prophet, and there's a king, a Canaanite king called King Jabin and he is threatening the people of Israel. And his army leader is Sisera. And so, he has sent Sisera out and cause all kinds of devastation. And so, we find out that Deborah is a prophetess. And then the first thing that we know is that she's going to Barak who is the head of the Israelite army, and she's giving him instructions. So, she basically says, she says, The Lord of Israel commands you go take possession, oh, sorry, go take position at Mount Tabor bringing 10,000 from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zeppelin, I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army to meet you by the water Kishon with his chariots and troops, and I will give him into your hand. So, this is the word of God to Barak, the army guy. Barak says to her, if you will go with me, I will go but if you will not go with me. I'm not going basically. So, we get the sense that in spite of her credentials, he doesn't really trust that she's got this right. So, it's like if you believe this enough to go and do this Then okay, I will come with you and and that will be my insurance that you know what you're talking about. So, she said, Deborah says, I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And so basically, it's saying, she's saying great that you're finally going to say yes to what God is telling you. But you're not going to get the glory for winning this battle completely, you're not going to get to wipe out the other General. A woman's going to do that. So, it's this, this whole cause and effect kind of thing you see in the Old Testament and the New Testament. You know, because you this is back with Abraham and Sarah, you know, you laughed. Oh, I didn't laugh. I didn't laugh. Yes. But because you laughed, you know, then there's the consequences. So, this is kind of a pattern. So, so Barak, and with, with Deborah there with him, they go into this situation, and it works out. It works out. Right, right? And all those sisters men are killed and he flees on foot. See, the thing was, he had the advantage of chariots and iron, and so he has much superior force. And it's really becoming a problem for the Israelites. So anyhow, all of his all of his sister's guys are wiped out. And, and he flees. Barak doesn't get to pursue him and kill him. And so Sisera has fled away on foot to the tent of Jael of Heber the Kenite. For there was peace between King Jabin of Hazor, and the clan of Heber the Kenite. So, he goes to who he assumes, will be his ally in all of this. And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, turn aside my Lord, turn aside to me Have no fear. So, he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. So, to hide him in case anyone came, and then he said to her, please give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty. So, she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. So, if you think about what we know about milk and how it makes you sleepy, you know, like warm milk at night, that kind of thing. Alright, so gave him a drink and covered him. He said her stand at the entrance of the tent. And if anybody comes and asks, Is anyone here say no. But Jael wife of Heber took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground. He was lying fast asleep from weariness, and he died. Then, as Barak came in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, come, I will show you the man whom you're seeking. So, he went into her tent, and there was Sisera lying dead, with a tent peg in his temple. So, on that day, God subdued King Jabin of Canaan before the Israelites, and I just want to put that sentence in, because that frames the whole thing, what Deborah said and did and what Jael said and did as God's work as God's intention to protect God's people from King Jabin.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 1:03:56

So, Jael, nailed it, so to speak, right? Oh, but yeah, this story reminds we probably should do a separate episode on violence in the Hebrew Bible. We're certainly we certainly aren't wanting to glorify the violence here. But it's

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 1:04:12

But we are we are letting them speak from their context.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 1:04:17

Remember, this is late Bronze Age, early Iron Age. So, we have to go with that here.

**Karin Peter** 1:04:21

I think it also gives us a counterpoint to some of the other stories where women are reacting to injustice and violence done against them. In this story, Deborah and Jael are both proactive in trying to accomplish what they see as, as right or as the perfect what needs to happen. And we're not used to seeing that when we look at female characters in Scripture. We're used to them being reactive rather than proactive.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 1:04:49

That's it. Yes, exactly.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 1:04:52

It's It's so interesting how fascinated by how Deborah is described. She has a husband. But the husband is almost incidental to the story. It's, she's, you know, she has a husband named Lapidoth. But he's like a non player in this very unusual, you know, in the Hebrew Bible, this stories about Deborah and God and God using Deborah and God using Jael. And the the male figures in the story come off as they're portrayed as either inconsequential, or unable to

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 1:05:31

perceive what God is doing.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 1:05:32

Right, exactly. So, I think that's, that's this is one of those, one of those little stories in the Hebrew Bible, where I like to call them gender justice seams in the stories, this, so much of the Hebrew Bible reflects the patriarchal cultures in which it was formed. And yet, there are little seams like think thinking of mine of little scenes of gold, here and there, where you recognize that there were other realities going on in ancient Israel, that the that those who created the texts, probably screened out some but couldn't fully screen out. And so, this is one of those where you have two strong women characters whom God is using in the storyline. And the men are less important than the story.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 1:06:22

And I think it's really interesting. Just think about the status of the women. Yes, they both are wives, but again, they are not subservient to those men, they don't have to ask permission for the things that they

are doing. And there's no also no note of either of them having children. And this is also a place where in a culture where the number and gender of your offspring matter towards your status. That is, it's pertinent that that's not there. Because that's not how these women are being, worth is being determined. So, what are some of the messages or implications that Deborah's story emphasizes, there's a whole bunch of them, but God will use who God will use. I mean, that's also the storyline with Sarah and Abraham, is that they're not particularly wonderful people. You know, they've made all kinds of mistakes and stuff too, but God uses who God uses, and to not question that. It emphasizes that women are as essential to God's plan as men, that women are instruments of God's will, Deborah, and God's judgment, Jael and call his call call is calling you, you respond to call because it is the call. And authority comes in many ways. And, you know, the are harking back to what we're talking about earlier, while the Hebrew Bible is very patriarchal, in lots of its underlying assumptions, there are some glimpses like this, that show that God is not bound by cultural gender stereotypes or constructs. Yeah, maybe the authors are and maybe much of the population is but God isn't. And, and this was one i thought was quite, quite fun to look at. And there's also a warning in the text about taking women or anyone for granted, that you know who they are, or you know, what their limits are. So, there's two messages in the text. One is Barak's lack of trust, means he doesn't, you know, have the glory he might have been seeking. And the other is that Sisera assumed he knew women, and knew what to expect from them, and assumed that what he wanted is what women would do. That it's his sense of privilege that, that they would take, they would do what he wanted them to do, and, and Sisera's assumption that women will do whatever men want them to, proves fail. So, I think that's kind of a, I shouldn't say it, fun little message to get from this as well.

**Tony Chvala-Smith 1:09:16**

So, a lot going on, in these in these texts. And we get glimpses here and there of, of, you know, stories of defiance of resistance of claiming one's future for oneself in spite of the gender constructs that would otherwise severely limit a woman's freedom, and that the God of the Hebrew Bible, though often referred to as male pronouns, is not a man. I am who I am, I will be who I will be I am the one who is I am the one who causes to be don't confuse me with your gender constructs, which are constructs, right. I think that's very important.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith 1:10:00**

So now we're going to just go into the experience part where we take some passages of Scripture and then just pose a question or two that might help us to take them in more deeply. And, and as always, we remind people about how we are approaching scripture. And that is that we're describing the experience of the people in the story or the experience of the author. And they're, they're trying to describe their experience with God. And if any of this fits for you, great. If not, don't worry about it. But we're, we're just wanting you to look at this as a story, and to see what parts of it might speak to you. So, this is the part that I had read earlier. This is Deborah, giving all of her qualifications here. Prophetess wife, Judge, she goes to Barak, she says, here's what God is telling you to do. And Barak saying, Okay, if you will come with me and put you're yourself on the line here. And so and that, and that, I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And so, then a question to think about, as you consider that passage and these are self-reflective questions, or could be done in a group where people share their answers with each other. When have I wrongly doubted that God may be directing

someone because of enculturated ideas about them? So, when have I wrongly doubted that God was directing or using someone because of the views that I've just absorbed from being in my culture? And then, if you've realized you were wrong about what God who God was using? What did I do with the surprise? Did I let that be a new learning place? Does it still hold just a uncomfortableness in my memory? What have I done? Or what do I want to do with that insight. So then, we'll go on to the next segment. And this was, again, what I read. Sisera flees, goes to jail, assumes that she's on his side, and we'll take care of him. And, and she takes a tent peg, and basically kills him in his sleep. He may, probably was asleep. And then lets Barak know that she has found his man, so to speak. And then the the affirmation that God is the power behind what all had happened in the story. So, I did put a little note in, if you're uncomfortable with violence in scriptures, remember that these authors write from their time in place, and from their understanding of how God is helping them. And for many of Old Testament writers, they see themselves as a people who are a small group of people who are constantly being taken advantage of or marginalized. And so, this idea of God helping them in war was very important. So, a couple of questions then to take from the second passage. How did Sisera's perspective on women's roles and his own sense of entitlement blind him? And when have mine blinded me? And that's whether we're women or men, or somewhere else on the gender spectrum, where have we been guilty of assuming someone's who someone is, by the rules that the society has given? Or when has our own sense of entitlement blinded us to someone else is? And then the another question, when have I dismissed someone because of their gender identity, or not seeing them as a representative of God's will or worker? So, some questions that can make us uncomfortable and to go deeper into how is it that God works with people today? Where am I missing it? Where am I are my assumptions getting in the way of what God may be wanting me to hear or do or see, or ways in which God is calling me to act, maybe maybe like a Deborah, or a Jael? Just have to leave to have as an option. Ah, so fascinating women, and raising some really relevant questions and ideas about women and how we read Scripture. So, thanks for, thank you for bringing those questions to us and asking us to pursue this little bit.

**Karin Peter** 1:15:57

Well, thank you for kind of guiding us through some of this so that we don't continually gloss over these female characters in the narratives of the Hebrew Scriptures as we tend to do when we read through them, but really look at what is the author of the text trying to tell us by including these people, and, and what happens in there. And it takes us beyond just skimming the surface of Scripture and looking at what it can say to us, regardless of gender. And I appreciate the questions that you ask, your reflection questions at the end, because it really does help us do that, to go beyond our immediate kind of reaction to the Scripture and make us again, look at our own self and say, how does this affect me and my discipleship? Which is the purpose of reading scripture to begin with.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 1:16:48

And it keeps us from letting the Bible be a moralistic text that we get other people with as well.

**Karin Peter** 1:16:58

Although I'm sure my indignation will return as we continue on through with these.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 1:17:05

We anticipate that not only from you, but from us. plenty, plenty of texts to wrestle with, I think, one has to decide that it's worth wrestling with them. And I quite understand when some friends and colleagues that I just can't wrestle with this stuff anymore. I understand that. For myself, though, it's been really rewarding to try to go deeper to trust that there's depth in in this library books, and then to learn from to learn, especially from feminist theologians for out of how to read these texts differently. I wanted to recommend a little book for readers book that I like quite a bit. It's called Faith and Feminism by Nicola Slee. And it's a subtitle is An Introduction to Christian Feminist Theology, and she deals with some of the hermeneutical questions and some of the different ways feminist theologies have developed. But it's a nice way to get at some of the kinds of issues that we're, we're touching on in this podcast.

**Karin Peter** 1:18:08

Great, they're great recommendation. I also want to remind people that Charmaine has said, I think, in almost all of our He'Brew episodes, that some of these passages can be really triggering, if you're a victim of sexual abuse, or violence, or family intrigue and dysfunction, or whatever it may be. If a passage is really triggering for you, then feel free to just not deal with it right now. And, and not not force yourself to do that, but find a find another way through that. And so that option is we experienced scripture, we forget sometimes.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 1:18:46

There's lots, so many, many ways that God reaches us and scripture doesn't have to be the primary one, especially if we're dealing with those kinds of situations.

**Karin Peter** 1:19:00

Okay, so with all of this, this is one of our longer episodes as we tried to cram all of these stories into one and maybe we will do another She'Brew as we as we go forward. But I want to thank you, again, for helping us with as our scripture guides here. So, is there any last comment or thought that you would like to share before we wrap up?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 1:19:26

Justice is an ongoing pursuit and process. It's the thing that is dearest to God's heart. And so, it is it is part of being a prophetic people that we want to wrestle with questions of economic justice, of social justice, of gender, justice, these, these things are connected to the reign of God that Jesus preached. And so it really, really matters that we take the time to look deep. Go deep. You and be willing to be surprised by what's going on even in these texts that can sometimes be so troubling to us.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 1:20:07

I think, thing I would probably want to say is that, you know, just as today we're understanding that children need to see people like themselves in the books they read in the movies they see, to really develop a good sense of who they are, especially if their population has been marginalized in some way. I would say that as your, as you go to the Bible and encounter some of these women to be reminded that they're all different, too. They aren't all the same. They don't all see God the same way. They don't all serve God the same way. They don't all challenge the culture around them in the same way that to see the many sides of ourselves, in the women in the Bible, and to not to not judge

ourselves as not enough. When we when we are comparing ourselves to a strong woman, but, but to to let ourselves see ourselves in the myriad of women that we find in the Bible.

**Karin Peter** 1:21:22

Thank you, both Tony and Charmaine, we have a closing thought for this first she brew episode. And it comes from a Robert Ellsberg book called Blessed Among All Women, which is actually a book about different saints, female saints and martyrs. And it's from the foreword of that book and Ellsberg writes this. "This story of each holy person is also a story about God. In each of these stories, there is an invitation to enter into the larger universe that they inhabited. What happens next is the beginning of our own story." So, with his interesting comment there, the foreword to his text will close this first episode of She'Brew. And until next time, when I Karin, Peter, join Tony and Charmaine, I give you our grateful thanks for listening.

**Josh Mangelson** 1:22:27

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