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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.

**Carla Long** 00:31

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Carla Long, and this is Percolating on Faith, a series where we discuss theological matters with Charmaine and Tony Chvala-Smith. Welcome back, Tony and Charmaine.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 00:44

Hi, Carla, how are you doing?

**Carla Long** 00:46

We're doing great. I'm so excited about this episode. So listeners, you are incredibly lucky because not only is this Percolating on Faith, your very, very favorite series, of course, but we are starting a new subset of Percolating on Faith, a place where we discuss theology, and only theology. What it is, why it's important, and this subset is called something really cool. Wait for it. Wait for it. . . God Shot! You like that? So, actually, Tony and Charmaine, I don't know which one of you came up with this subset title, but why don't you tell us what a God shot is and why it's such a perfect name for this podcast?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 01:27

Sure. Well, a God shot is, in coffee terms, like a near perfect shot of espresso. So, we were looking for, kind of looking for some proper coffee terminology to use for this new series that kind of fits the theme of Percolating on Faith, and lo and behold, I discovered that in the coffee world, God shot is this great term. Interestingly, some listeners may know that God shot is also used by Alcoholics Anonymous. Alcoholics Anonymous use it as a description of a moment in an Alcoholics life when God becomes surprisingly real, and things happen that are just not coincidences. So you can keep that in the background, but our choice of the term for this series of podcasts is God Shot, and we're thinking of it in espresso terms, and using it as. . . you can also think of this series as Theology 101, but God Shot just sounds a lot more fun.

**Carla Long** 02:34

You know, I actually, after you told me about God shot, I looked it up, and of course, I looked it up on the place I look up all of my theological terms: *Urban Dictionary*, and it was just perfect. So Tony, thanks for coming up with that. I appreciate that. I think it's a really perfect title for what we were trying to do here, because I think what we've learned is that a lot of people are a little bit scared of the word theology, I think, and maybe they don't understand the different types of theology, what goes into studying theology, and so I think that this subset of Percolating on Faith, God Shot, is just a way to kind of ease people into that study of theology. Wouldn’t you say?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 03:15

Oh, yeah.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 03:16

Great way to say it.

**Carla Long** 03:18

Yeah. Well, so let's just, I'm gonna, I'm gonna hit you, no, I'm gonna pitch you an easy one. What is theology?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 03:26

Sure, I mean, Charmaine, and I teach a course at Graceland University called Introduction to Christian Theology. And on the very first day of that course, when we teach it every other fall, that's the question we have to start with. And, so I think, a simple way to start with it is to say that theology is careful, informed reflection on one's faith in God. That's one way to think about it. There's a classic definition that we love a lot that comes, well, it's traced, usually to St. Anselm of Canterbury in the 11th century. He referred to theology as “faith seeking, understanding.” But the idea there is as old as St. Augustine in the fourth century, so that the concept here is that faith refers to this living dynamic relationship of being grasped by this unknown we call God, and faith seeking understanding is our attempt to make as much sense of that as we can. So theology is trying to make sense of our relationship with God.

**Carla Long** 04:47

So, I mean, it's a whole bunch more than just, you know, theology, the study of God, It”s more personal than that, it sounds like.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 04:56

Yeah, yeah, it is. It's using the words and thoughts and writings of others from the past, but not so much to study them and say, “Ooh, what is God? Who is God to them, and that's who God should be to me.” When we're pulling in other views and other writers, it's to help us find words, ways to describe ways to take in deeper what this relationship with God is about. So it's based in a relationship, but you can, theologians can reach far and wide to learn about and to use others’ experiences and understandings to to help shape their own way of describing that.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 05:54

So we can say that, you know, any any kind of theistic religion has something like theology that is something like careful reflection on what is believed. There are Islamic theologies, and there are Jewish theologies, and there are Christian theologies. And because we are, Charmaine and I are Christians in the Community of Christ tradition, our our primary context for thinking about our faith is a Christian context. And so, in Christian theology, there are some particular sources and ways of approaching the topic. And we'll get to those in subsequent podcasts. We're actually going to approach this quite systematically.

**Carla Long** 06:48

Well, that's new.

[Laughter]

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 06:52

You mean that systematic part?

**Carla Long** 06:53

Yes, that systematic part.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 06:55

We'd like the willy-nilly kind of approach, but. . .

**Carla Long** 06:59

I actually appreciate both the willy-nilly and the systematic. So you've talked a little bit about different types of theologies? What are what are more types of theologies that people have probably heard of?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 07:10

I think there's some that more recent, that people are probably familiar with. Liberation theologies, feminist theologies, womanist theologies. There’s process theology. There's also various kinds of historical theology. And. . .

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 07:34

Yeah.

**Carla Long** 07:35

Ego.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 07:36

Ego, great. Thank you.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 07:38

Yeah. And like liberation theology is are often broken down into subsets like Latin American liberation theology, and Charmaine mentioned womanist theology which is the type of liberation theology that African American women theologians practice. So there's all kinds of ways to think about one's faith depending on one’s setting and experiencing context.

**Carla Long** 08:03

So is it important to know what kind of theology that you subscribe to, or is that not important at all?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 08:12

Again, I think it's good to be informed about what are the kinds of main themes that run through different theologies? Partly so that you can, again, have language, know what is a consistent, for instance, liberation theology. What are consistent elements that would be in various kinds of liberation theology? Sometimes, we may have a tendency to pick and choose, mix and match theology. And though, I think probably all of us, to some extent may do that, we can often end up with competing concepts. Ones that actually may weaken someone's overall understanding rather than to fortify it, and it’s not like there's just one right way of thinking theologically. There's a lot of different ways, but it is good to know what these different kinds of theologies are. So Tony, how would you describe a few of them?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 09:28

Yeah, well, for example, let's go to feminist theology, or at least feminist Christian theology. Feminist Christian theology would be types of theological reflection that take women's experience of oppression and marginalization as really central to trying to understand the meaning and contents of the Christian faith. That becomes a kind of a lens by which to interpret and reinterpret Christian faith. So that's generally speaking how a theology of that type works. African American theologies of liberation, of course, take the experience of racism in different cultures and use that as a kind of interpretative tool for understanding Christian faith. That's kind of one way to approach it. I mean, theology, like love, is a dance that you'll learn as you go kind of. So you have to start somewhere, and you have to be open to a lot of course corrections as you go.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 10:32

And for us, that's one of the things that is a necessary element in any theology, and that is a willingness to ask questions. To look honestly and openly at what the belief is, or what experience is, or what are the accepted understandings of who God is, and be willing to face and address the questions. So that's, if you want to keep growing theologically, that the best path is to keep asking questions and being open to hearing.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 11:08

And actually one of the, we're going to suggest a couple of books later that will be our companions through through the series, but in one of those books, *Faith Seeking Understanding* by Daniel Migliore, he further defines theology as “faith asking questions.” They’re not pointless, meaningless questions. They’re questions that come out of the experience of faith, and that are urgent, urgent questions for us to keep asking about what we believe, why we believe it, what do we do when we need to make changes or transformations of our beliefs, and who is this God who keeps pestering us so much?

**Carla Long** 11:49

So like a lot of things we discuss, it sounds like to be a theologian, one of the things you need to be is vulnerable? And say, “Well, I don't know the answer to this, but I'm willing to pray or find out or whatever to figure it out.” So that's already a little bit scary, I'm sure for some people.

[laughter]

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 12:09

Yeah. And I think one of the things that might be helpful is something that we really advocate as a way of thinking about ourselves, is that if you have ever thought about your faith, if you have ever asked questions, if you've ever tried to explain your faith to somebody else, you already are a theologian. You're doing what theology is about. Of course, you can equip yourself with specific tools to become like a more full time theologian or professional theologian, and take courses or get a degree in theology. Even then, it's really important that that you're sure that the place that you're going to get a theological education is a place where questions and vulnerability are welcome, rather than a place where all they want to do is pour the right answers into your head and have you repeat them verbatim. So yeah, so I think that's helpful with that kind of intimidating feeling that people might have about, ooh, this theology thing sounds hard or dangerous in some way.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 13:42

Yeah, you know that's a really good point in that term, or that phrase, “faith seeking understanding.” The Latin phrase is fides quaerens intellectum. Intellectum in Medieval Latin refers to the use of reason. So theology is not just pouring a bunch of Bible texts and prefabbed answers into people's heads. It's actual rational, critical reflection on our faith. It's really important, I think, since we're on the topic of questioning, to recognize that this is, I think, a big problem in all kinds of Christianity. It's this constant tendency or temptation to confuse faith with certitude when faith itself is an act of profound trust. It's not about having absolute certainty about things. Faith is, Paul says in one of those letters, “we walk by faith and not by sight.” The theologian recognizes that faith seeking understanding is going to be a journey, and that this is a journey that the church is on together, and we've got to be open to the questions that are posed along the way.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 15:05

Yeah, and just adding on another piece here, and that is that theology is done best in community. You know, we can each of us go and read some book and feel like, we're suddenly smarter than everybody else and deeply inspired. But if we don't have a place to check that, to check it against how we live, how we live in community, how we live our lives. Theology is not just about ideas that we carry around in our head and play games with other people with. It's intended to help shape us help create places for faith to grow. So it's really important that we have others to bounce the ideas, and the concepts, and the struggles with, so that we can, we try out the ideas and not just go from fad, to fad, to fad, but discover, with the help of others. What has lasting value? What’s consistent with our understanding and experience of God, of Christ, of the Spirit? So not to be afraid of the theological journey, you're probably already on it if you're listening to this podcast.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 16:37

Probably very much on it already. I think that whole point about community is so important. Actually, theology is less scary when you're doing it with other people, when you're when you're in a group of folks who are committed to that journey. I think it's that goes back to the roots of Christianity. Jesus didn't call a bunch of soloists. Jesus called a community formed a community for trying to live out, make sense of, interpret, reinterpret his teachings. It's just so important.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 17:10

So we've been talking a lot, Carla, is this making sense?

**Carla Long** 17:13

Yeah, absolutely.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith**

Okay.

**Carla Long**

I've been really appreciative of it. So another question I had before we move on to a certain type of theology to discuss, and you've alluded to this, and you've talked about this, but we haven't listed them out. So why is the study of theology even important? You know, why even do it? If everybody's already kind of a theologian if you have a faith that seeks understanding?

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**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 17:42

I think is that it's kind of like growing physically. You don't stop growing new cells just because you've got lots of them. It's the same with theology. You don't just stop somewhere with a complete and tidy theology. It’s something that continues to inform you and continues to stretch and shift with you throughout life. And that's one of the reasons it's important is that it's not a straight jacket. It's something that keeps growing with you and invites you to keep growing. You know, sometimes we face something in life that we haven't ever faced before, like some kind of a trauma, or the death of someone. And we’re having to. . ., and that can be a time when our theology takes a big zigzag. Suddenly, the things we thought we believed don't seem so real anymore, and the answers we thought we had aren't fitting for the situation, or the grief, or the uncertainty that we're feeling. So, just naming the theological task as that, helps us to know that it's an ongoing thing in our lives, and just because our our views change, or we ask some questions of thoughts, beliefs that we had, or were trained to believe as children, doesn't mean we're being unfaithful. It means that we're being open to the Spirit in this moment, in this time, and that's all theology. That's this relationship with God that keeps changing and growing with us. So it's kind of essential, I think.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 19:52

Yeah, I mean, that that's a really good question. Why do we need this? Why is it important? I could think of another reason why theology is important, and that is because religion can be a tool of powerful abuse in people's lives. And unless you learn to think critically about a religion, about one's own religion, it's so easy to turn one’s sense of desire for the ultimate into the absolute conviction that one is the ultimate, and we all see what happens in American religious culture when that goes on. Theology is a way we check ourselves. It's a way we restrain our impulses to try to totalize everything and make everybody conform to our way of looking at stuff. Theology helps us realize that what we're talking about, ultimately is a God who is infinite and beyond our our best capacities to articulate even though we need to try. Theology is essential to help us not use our sacred texts in ways that manipulate and abuse people. It helps us stay open to the idea that God still has more light and truth and that the meaning of life is unfolding in front of us. It keeps us from misinterpreting Jesus, and what Jesus was about, and turning it into, you know, simplistic formulas or bumper stickers. There's all these things that theology helps us do, and the more good theology we learn, and the more we learn how to be thoughtful theologians, lots of ways, the more it opens us more fully to the God that we're trying to follow. There's lots of reasons to learn theology to gain new vocabulary and new experience by immersing ourselves in this long journey that theology has been.

**Carla Long** 22:04

Yeah, I'm convinced, I know, I well, of course I am. But actually, you know, in Community of Christ, we say a lot that we really want people to think critically about it. And I think that for the most part, we follow through with that. That we really want people to think critically about who God is to them, who Jesus is to them, and make sure that they're just not swallowing everything that is said from the pulpit, making sure they're thinking about it. So, Tony, I really appreciate that you said that about being able to think critically about your religion. I mean, I think that's one reason, that’s one thing that makes Community of Christ who we are, because we want that. We don't want people to just walk away and think no big deal. In fact, every time I preach a sermon, and I see people nodding, and no one says anything to me about it afterwards, I realized that I must have done it horrible sermon only because no one's thinking about it now.

[Tony laughs]

You know? The whole thinking about it, and being active in your faith is, I think, a really cool part about learning theology. So thank you for saying that. I appreciate that. So, we've talked a little bit about different types of theology. You mentioned different types of theology. Tonight, I believe we want to talk about systematic theology. Right?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith**

Correct.

**Carla Long**

Yes. So let's jump into that. What is systematic theology?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 23:32

Well, in Christian theology, there's different divisions of labor we'll call it. So you say that there's biblical theology, which which tries to understand the Scripture in terms of its witness to God, Christ and Spirit? And there's historical theology, which tries to understand how has the church's faith in Christ been interpreted through the ages? And what can we gain from, you know, say, ancient or medieval, early modern theologians that might help us in our journey now? There’s philosophical theology, which often tries to reflect on how our current ways of understanding and knowing things might be useful for the theological tasks. There's pastoral theology, which deals very practically with things like preaching and pastoral care, and what's appropriate when you make pastoral visits, that kind of thing. There's also what's called spiritual theology, which is about spiritual practices and spiritual formation and the actual life of discipleship. Systematic theology is another division of labor. And the simplest way to describe it is that it's the methodical explication of the contents of the Christian faith. It's an old discipline in Christianity goes back, gosh, at least to the third century, and it arose in Christianity in the Roman Empire as a way to help converts to this new religion, who are coming from polytheistic pagan religions into Christianity. How do you help them understand what it is they're being going to be baptized into? So systematic theology arose primarily as a way to very carefully and methodically explain what Christian faith is. And there's a sort of traditional order to how it's done and it followed the creeds that were developing in the third and fourth centuries. So in other words, you explain the faith by saying. . ., you start with we believe. What does it mean to have faith? How do we have any knowledge of God at all? We believe in as the creed would have said, God, the Father Almighty. Who is this Christian God that we we worship? Creator of heaven and earth? What does it mean that God is creator in that ancient Roman context? And then, we believe in Jesus Christ, his only son? So who is Jesus? What is Jesus about? What does Jesus bring? How do we connect to Jesus? And in the Holy Spirit, who is the Holy Spirit? And how are these three one God? And so that’s how systematic theology arose as this attempt to try and very carefully, and as the Word says, systematically, help converts or potential converts to Christianity understand what they were getting into, right? What what do we believe and why do we believe it? So that's what systematic theology is basically about. I think one thing we should say before anybody gets too nervous about. . . I use the word creed. The word creed simply comes from a Latin word that means to believe, and creeds are statements of belief. They arose in ancient Christianity as the kinds of things that were used at baptismal services. In other words, they were kind of, I think of them as the Pledge of Allegiance that people were making when they were being baptized into the faith of Jesus. The restoration tradition is not is not actually a foreigner to creeds. Joseph Smith Jr. in what in Community of Christ, we called Doctrine and Covenants, Section 17, gives a kind of his own approximation of what's in the Apostles Creed there. You can put the two side by side and see quite amazing similarities. Joseph was aware of these. In his 1842 statement, something that in our tradition we call the Epitome of Faith, that was a kind of creed, and Community of Christ has used statements of belief ever since. What we don't do with them is we don't turn them into a kind of, you know, sign in blood here, and if you vary a syllable. . .

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 27:57

Not a test of membership.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 28:00

They’ve always been intended to be kind of a shorthand way to get at what Christianity is about, or I guess I'd say, they’re like the Sparks Notes of Christianity. So systematic theology, tried to try to take these Sparks Notes and say, “This is what we mean by this. This is what we mean by this. This is what we mean by that.” Does that help? Carla?

**Carla Long** 28:23

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So, I mean, but there's so many different types, like how, how do you keep them straight? Or how do you choose one? Or do you have to choose one?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 28:35

One kind of theology? Or what kind of?

**Carla Long** 28:39

Yeah, one kind of theology?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 28:40

I mean, like I said earlier, we all do mix and matches. We probably all have benefited, if we've been churchgoers at all, we've probably all benefited from somebody’s systematic theology, from somebody's systematic approach to these topics of who is God, and who is Christ, and what is the Holy Spirit, and what is scripture, and what is revelation, and all of those kinds of things. The good thing about approaching something in a systematic way, in a systematic theology, is that you get to see the continuity. Continuity between what is it we believe about God and, therefore then, what is consistent to believe about who Jesus is, or what Jesus’ ministry meant or what Jesus’ death and resurrection mean. So that's the beauty of systematic theologies. I would say that among mainstream Christians, there's a lot, so I'm thinking Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopal or Anglican, Presbyterians, that their approach to systematic theology would be all very similar. And I would say Community of Christ’s systematic theology would would have many, many, many, many, many touch points along the way. In fact, the two books that we're going to suggest. . . I'll go ahead and name them right now. So what we're suggesting is that if there are listeners who would like to get a textbook on a systematic theology and read the appropriate chapter for our next God Shot, that they could do so, and the two books that we're recommending are: one is called *Faith Seeking Understanding* by Daniel Migliore. It's the third edition. Migliore is spelled m, i, g, l, i, o, r, e, because that's always tricky. And the other one is *Introduction to Christian Theology* by Bradley C. Hansen. This is a text that we use in our undergraduate classes when we're looking at an Introduction to Christian theology. And Hanson's background is Lutheran, and Migliore. . .

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 31:41

Migliore is Presbyterian. Migliore was one of my teachers when I was at seminary, and another Community of Christ member, Dale Luffman, who's retired now from Council of Twelve was also a student of Migliore.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 31:54

And so these are our two systematic theologies from different denominations, but ones that would have very similar understandings of those categories that are part of us a systematic theology. We'll be telling you each time what chapters to read in those books if you'd like to do a little background reading before our next topic in systematic theology,

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 32:25

Yeah, and so, Charmaine mentioned one of these books is from a Lutheran and one’s from a Presbyterian, and yet, they and Community of Christ share a lot of common language and common concepts, but each one is flavored a little differently. Right? So Migliore’s flavoring is his Presbyterian Reformed Tradition, and Hanson's flavorings is a kind of modern Lutheran’s.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 32:52

So one is mint chocolate chip and the others hot fudge.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 32:54

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. [Laughter] And then what we're going to try to do each time when we're on a topic is we're going to try to also give what a Community of Christ flavoring of a particular topic might be. For example, when we get to the Trinity, we're going to say that we share in common with these figures, Migliore and Hanson, as well as with the whole Western Christian tradition, belief in God as Trinity. A distinctively Community of Christ flavoring of that doctrine is that we can connect it to Zion. That is the idea of living in community because if God's eternal being is communal, then that ought to be, we think that that ought to be reflected in our work in the world, that community is not just some catchy, some sort of catchy little thing that we have kind of grabbed onto but actually, living in community is a reflection of the very essence of God's being. So that's an example of how we might give a little Community of Christ flavoring to things we otherwise share in common with these other traditions. Hanson, Charmaine mentioned, we use Hanson with undergraduates because Hanson taught undergrads, and he wrote this book for undergrads, and so we like it for its clarity and simplicity. Migliore taught seminar students, so he is very, very careful and methodical, and very precise and very thorough. Both of these theologians like us in Community of Christ are extremely sensitive to issues of gender inclusion, and equality, and the search for justice. So those are some some texts we can recommend, and, in fact, actually, for our next God Shot, Karla, we would say our topic is going to be what does it mean that God is self revealing? For those who want to read a chapter in either book, if they want to read the book, in Migliore, it'd be chapter two, and in Hanson, it'd be chapter one. So that will be our topic for our next shot. What does it mean that God is self revealing?

**Carla Long** 35:19

Okay, so just so our listeners get that. So in Hanson's book, *Intro to Christian Theology*, that's chapter one.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 35:25

And and it's titled “Faith in Theology.”

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 35:29

Yeah, the chapter.

**Carla Long** 35:30

And for, for next time in *Faith Seeking Understanding*, read chapter two.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 35:36

Right, which is the title is “Meaning of Revelation.”

**Carla Long** 35:41

Awesome. And we'll be discussing, what does it mean that God is self revealing?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith**

Right, right.

**Carla Long**

Very fun.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 35:48

Because before you can talk about who is this God, you have to talk about how do we even know there might be a God? So that's why we start where we start.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 36:03

Right? Right, right. Is God just a concept we conveniently made up in our heads?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 36:08

Because there are some atheists and agnostics today who would say that's, that's basically what religion is?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 36:16

Or is the concept of God that's in our heads that we've come up with. . . Is it actually a correlate? Does it correlate to something that's going on, i.e., God actually is, and God's trying to get in touch with us? So, one of the things we'll approach next time.

**Carla Long** 36:34

That'll be really interesting. I am looking forward to that. So, listeners, I hope you understand this is really just an introduction to a kind of a subset of our Percolating on Faith series. We really want to discuss with you, and for you, what theology is and why we think that it's important in Community of Christ that we understand we are theologians, and the things that we think, and say, and do actually do matter.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 36:59

Yeah, absolutely. I think one thing we'd like to add to this too, is that theology isn’t. . . There’s a lot of intellectual discipline that goes into it, but we want to stress too, that this is not just a head trip. Theology at its best involves the whole person, and that includes our heart. It includes our faith life, our devotional life, so prayer, as well as study, belong in our theological practice. Very, very important. If this God we're going to talk about is real than trying to have real and vital contact with this God is extremely important aspect of our theological reflection.

**Carla Long** 37:52

Yeah, because if you're just too much head or too much heart, then well, you just become a little bit unreachable, unreachable in both of those ways, right?

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 38:01

Yeah. Either one can lead you into a two dimensional world.

**Carla Long** 38:11

Well, thank goodness, I'm not all head.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 38:15

Well, you you have a wonderful balance. You have a very strong pastoral side that you just can't help but let out, and all I have to do is hear and see you preach as there are tears running down your cheeks, and I know that though you’re well reasoned in your sermon, you’re engaged fully in it.

**Tony Chvala-Smith**

Yeah, absolutely.

**Carla Long** 38:44

That's very kind. Gosh, thanks. My husband would say I preach to him every day without tears running down.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 38:49

Lucky him.

**Carla Long** 38:53

Exactly.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 38:56

Yes. He just needs to learn to listen to God, doesn't he, Carla?

**Carla Long** 39:01

As God speaks through me, yes. Well, listeners, you're welcome that we took you down that path. Sorry about that. Thank you, Charmaine, that was very kind. So is there anything else that we need to discuss as kind of an introduction to our God Shot series?

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 39:17

People can send you questions maybe along the way. And in subsequent God Shots, maybe we can spend a few minutes trying to just toss around and clarify.

**Carla Long** 39:27

That's a great idea. Yeah. Any questions you can write down listener at the Project Zion website, which is projectzionpodcast.org. You can send in some questions, you can leave comments, and we'll be sure to get those.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 39:42

Well, we're happy to be doing this journey together on this on this particular series.

**Carla Long** 39:47

Yeah, I'm super excited about it. Thank you so much for being willing to even go a little bit deeper into our Percolating on Faith series and just really try. . . and is attack the wrong word? Attack theology. Really get after it.

**Tony Chvala-Smith** 40:02

Immerse ourselves in theology. How does that sound?

**Carla Long** 40:05

That's a little bit kinder I think. I like it a little more peaceful.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 40:09

Or flail around in theology. That's probably more accurate for most of us.

**Carla Long** 40:14

I actually have this really good picture in my mind of what that looks like, and I like it. I like it. Well, thanks again for being here, and I look forward to the rest of our series.

**Charmaine Chvala-Smith** 40:26

All right. Thank you.

**Josh Mangelson** 40:28

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