



# God Hears Her Podcast

## Episode 41 - Beauty in the Midst of Despair

### Elisa Morgan and Eryn Eddy with Ruth Naomi Floyd

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Our God will never leave us, nor forsake us. He goes before us and alongside of us. And so in these troubling times, the blues seasons of our life, He is present. He hears His daughters. He understands, and He will answer. It may take a while. It may be in the midnight hour, but He will answer.

[music]

Voice: You're listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women, where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you. He sees you, and He loves you because you are His. Find out how these realities free you today on *God Hears Her*.

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**Elisa:** Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Elisa Morgan.

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**Eryn:** And I'm Eryn Eddy. And I think it's safe to say that we've all experienced the blues at different times in our lives. But as Christians, how are we supposed to walk through those seasons of sadness, discouragement, or worse? Our guest today, jazz singer, Ruth Naomi Floyd, shares both the practical ways and the artistic ways that we can find beauty in the midst of despair.

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**Elisa:** Just some background information about Ruth Naomi. As a vocalist and a composer, Ruth Naomi Floyd has been at the forefront of creating vocal jazz settings that express theology and justice, like, for over 25 years. She's also a committed music educator. Miss. Floyd is director of Jazz Studies at Cairn University in Langhorne, Pennsylvania and an adjunct, an artist in residence, at Temple University. And before that Miss. Floyd taught music for 20 years at the City School.

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**Eryn:** In addition to her musical talent, Ruth Naomi is also an award-winning fine art photographer, specializing in black and white portrait images. She continues to make the city of Philadelphia her home,



where for over 25 years she has been devoted and active in providing compassionate care and spiritual support to people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. So let's get to our conversation on searching for beauty in the darkness with Ruth Naomi Floyd. This is *God Hears Her*.

**Elisa:** Start us off, if you don't mind, Ruth Naomi, throw open the doors and tell us a bit of...of your story, of how God found you, of how your voice was shaped. What...what factors influenced you? You know, who are you?

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Sure. I'm the middle daughter of urban missionaries, Reverend Melvin and Elizabeth Floyd. And so they shaped me. Amazingly they were doing urban missions before it was in vogue, if you will, or popular. In fact...

**Eryn:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...it was pretty radical. But they realized that there is a need, and God called them to fulfill that need. My dad was a decorated Philadelphia policeman, which was very rare in Philadelphia during that time, as an African-American male. And he kept reading the headlines. And there was a pretty brutal gang fight. And my mother just put down the paper and said, "What are we going to do about it?" And he prayed, and he felt the Lord was saying, "Put down your badge for your Bible," in a sense. Because the...

**Elisa:** Wow.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...badge was as a way of...he can reach the...the youths that way. So he packed up his three little girls and his wife and moved into one of the most dangerous areas of Philadelphia. And we served. And it was a beautiful time. It was a wonderful reminder of so much beauty in the midst of despair and...and trouble. I felt completely safe, even though there was a lot of violence going around us. And that speaks to the power of community. So it was powerful seeing their work and seeing them sacrifice, but seeing their immediate obedience to God's call. And it definitely has influenced me in my work that I do outside of music, in my justice work. And so I'm just really grateful for that. They both love the arts. They were born towards the end of Depression. And that wasn't an option, music lessons. So they made sure that each of their three girls played piano and two instruments. And we all sing. So I'm grateful for that too, that, that love of artistry and that love of creativity and...and knowing... They made that vow to themselves before they even met each other. It was one of the things that they wanted to make sure their...their spouse would agree to. And there were... Whether it came to, you know... I remember one time asking my mom, like, "This is the third time we've had this meal." And she'd just...teared up in her eyes, and she just said, "You will not miss a music lesson if you have to eat the same...same simple meal. That money's going toward music lessons." And so it was just...



**Elisa:** Wow.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...so grateful. And it's a reminder that we don't get where we are without those before us and surrounding us to push us onward.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** You sound like, the way you're describing them, they sound incredibly intentional.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yes.

**Elisa:** Like they...they had a...a plan, you know, for...for how they really wanted to raise their daughters, how they wanted to respond to God's work in their lives. Is that your experience?

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Absolutely. And they did it under fire. It's really important. They were ostracized by the Christian community, "Why aren't you just going to Africa and helping the Africans over there?" "Why are you trying to help...?" And they also understood that the issues and the violence didn't come on its own. That there...the reason why there wasn't solutions to it that it was benefitting, you know, powers that be or a certain narrative. So they were fighting against a lot, without a lot of Christian support in the early days. But they...they held strong and held onto what God called them to do. And thankfully they did see, you know, the Christian community come around and understand that, you know, we can start at Jerusalem and then go to Judea and go to the other parts...parts of the world. But they did it with amazing strength, endurance, and humility, and humility, yeah.

**Elisa:** And can I push into that just a little bit? When you're talking...

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Sure.

**Elisa:** ...about the Christian community that stood against them at first, was it a diverse community? A mainly African-American community? Was it a white community? What...what was your Christian community like that pushed against that...their call to the urban...the urban who needed to know Jesus?

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Um, I think it was both, African-American and white. I would say because of what was going on culturally in the city of Philadelphia... Philadelphia was just on fire. Our mayor, our police chief, there was just a lot of brutality. So it was both communities in different ways. You know, the African-American community was...embraced him, but wanted it done through a certain way, through...through the church or through an organization. And the white Christi...Christians were kind of



like, “Why are you going to go to Africa?” And both communities were concerned because it...it was the most violent parts of town. And my parents knew that they couldn’t reach the kids by driving in, spending the day, ministering to them, and driving out. That we had to live there...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...that we had to see and experience all that went on. And I was just a...a...a sensitive child that understood. So, you know, I look back and say, “How did my mom do that?” Or, “Was it right for her to allow me to see that or experience that?” She was very wise...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...in which daughters would see, but I... She also reminded, you know, in...in the last season of her life that I asked, like, you know, for instance, there was time where her heart would break when the mothers would come around and want to know where their sons died. And she did not want them to see the blood, so it was our way of serving the community, would... She and I would go out and hose the blood off. So I was very young. But I remember...

**Elisa:** Oh, my gosh.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...hearing my mom talk to my father and say, “I can’t let those mothers come out. So whenever I hear, I’m gonna go...” And she said that I asked because in my mind I remember just seeing a mother walk up and seeing that. Seeing the blood and...and so we didn’t want that. And she would put flowers there instead or...or something beautiful. And that stayed with me. But she also knew that, you know, maybe my other sisters wouldn’t be the right child to endure that or to experience that or that it would scar them or haunt them.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** And it didn’t for me. So that wisdom. And that’s kind of radical back then. You know? So... Yeah.

**Eryn:** It’s so evident in your story, too, like, how protected you were and maki...like, your family making a choice to be in a place of heartbreak and pain, like, how much God protected your thoughts and surrounded you guys with more faith than fear, it sounds like. And when I think about communities and when we have friends that go through hard times and devastating times, it’s when we are able to give them and loan them our faith when they feel faithless. And it just sounds like that’s exactly what your



family did, was you le...y'all leaned into a community to loan faith when faith was nowhere to be found. In...in...in fact, heartbreak was only found.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yeah. I would say there was an enormous amount of beauty.

**Eryn:** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** And I don't know that I was able to recognize it right away. I remember being very safe. But a lot of that was due to the people of faith that lived there, and they were in a predicament where they didn't have many options or access. But there was great Christians that lived there that helped in their own way on the block. And there was enormous amount of beauty. You know? And every so often I drive down the street and park and sit on the stairs. And now it's million-dollar homes, amazing beautiful homes. But I...I remember parts of that beauty. I remember that community at 7 a.m., all of us washing the...you know, the granite steps and...and all of us, you know, "I made lemonade. Here's an extra. Do you want a cup?" And there...that sharing. So there was... Like anything, there's beauty in the midst of darkness. There's light in the midst.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** And...and that's really powerful. And my parents, in their own way, without...I don't remember them directly saying, "There's beauty. Did you see that? That's beautiful." But they allowed us to see that. And I think that...what you're saying is...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...is really the saving grace. And that's what stuck with me, is that beauty for our ashes, that God can only do that.

**Eryn:** So good.

**Elisa:** You know, the way you're describing your upbringing, this rich textured layering of pain and beauty and this redemptive result of your understanding with your...your parents daring permission. How is jazz shaped with that? I mean your director of Jazz Studies at university, and you've been doing...singing, composing, playing jazz for decades. And your...your voice is, as Eryn said, just renowned for its intricacy, its integrity, beautiful words to describe it. I don't know that much about jazz. I'm learning. But can you help us (and especially the novice, like me) understand, isn't jazz an expression of this...this weaving of textures in our crazy world?



**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Absolutely. You know, I play flute and bassoon, so I had a...a beautiful large volume of European classical music. My father's favorite singer is Leontyne Price, so we listened to operas. And we listened to African-American gospel. We had that in church, so it was...it was wonderful. I would say what attracted me to jazz was its history. You know, when you trace it down, it comes to the African-American spirituals. So on this, you know, one of the darkest periods of our nation's history, there was birth in the midst of this oppression. There was birth, these songs that have not only stood the test of time, but that also birthed other genres of music that are played in and...and created around the world.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** And so jazz is...is birthed in protest, but it's also a conversation. And so everyone gets a chance to dialog. There's a theme, and everyone plays along with the theme. And then everyone gets a chance to bring their own journey, their own experience, their own skillset, their own language, their own creativity, their own imagination, and have a voice to speak it instrumentally or vocally. And then after everyone has a turn, then we go back together as a theme and end it. So it's a very democratic music. It's music where everyone can participate.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** And it's also a chance to, you know, be a part of a community, but still have your own voice. And then when I think of improvisational jazz, I think of theology. You know, beginning of Genesis 1:1 Jesus presents Himself as an artist, "In the beginning God created..." And then, you know, as you onto the cross, talking about this juxtaposition between ugliness and beauty at the cross that Jesus becomes the greatest blues singer ever born, you know? "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken me?" So you can't have jazz without that blues...or you shouldn't have jazz without that blues component. And so there again Jesus just gives us the gift of imagination, of wonder of improvisation, of a creativity. And, you know, one of the things that I love is that, you know, talking about Jesus as a blues singer, the greatest blues singer, and I love Ma Rainey and I love Bessie Smith, but you can't get more blues than that great line sung mournfully from the cross, but also it's where Zephaniah, the prophet tells us later, that that same blues singer sings over us with joy. One of the great blues singers says, "You know what...how you can tell a blues singer? The blues singer never stops singing," because there's always blues; there's something always to be blue about...

**Elisa:** Wow.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...in our own lives or in our friends' lives.

**Elisa:** Yes.



**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** So the blues singer always has a job, always has to sing the story. But Jesus, the blues singer, the greatest blues singer, turns the script and changes the script, and He then sings over us with joy. And He never stops singing. So that...those improvisational themes are amazing. And for me, you know, running warm in my veins are the people that created this body of music in so much oppression and so it's...it's particularly a black music. You hear that dance between dip...deepest despair to unspeakable joy. You hear a spiritual, and it's like the saddest line. And then the next line is joy.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** You...you go to a traditional... And it depends on denomination and...and church, but you hear there's nose kind of sense of there, "Let it all out. Let the grief, let the wailing, let the moan out." This isn't every African-American. We're diverse; we're not, you know, monolithic. But, you know, so we... You hear that dance between deepest despair to joy, and you see that in the minor prophets, and you see that throughout the Bible.

**Elisa:** And in the Psalms.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** And in the Psalms.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Absolutely.

**Elisa:** That's beautiful.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yeah, Job. You can't get more blues than that. "Why was I born? Why was I born?" You know?

**Elisa:** No kidding.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** Oh, I love that so much.

**Elisa:** So...so take that...can you take that and speak that to the woman who is right now listening going, "I am living the blues. I'm trying to sign 'em, but I don't see beauty in them. I see pain in them." And...and can you speak to her with what you've discovered of this amazing quilting and stitching and texturing of



both pain and beauty coming together? You know, how...how can we hold onto what God might be creating when we feel like we're lost in the ugly?

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Sure. When I was a little kid I didn't like Holy Thursday. To me it just didn't...it didn't make sense at... I grew up in the Rambo...

**Elisa:** Good point.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...era, so I didn't understand. At this point Jesus is supposed to be Rambo. He's supposed to...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...dethrone the evil empire and reign vi... And I just didn't... It made me feel uncomfortable seeing Jesus, like, "Will you pray with Me?" And clearly the disciples are more interested in sleeping. And then He's asking, basically, can this cup pass? I was like, "Wasn't that why You came? So that You could drink the bitter cup."

**Elisa:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** And just very confusing to me as a...a elementary school girl. I was...not that I loved good fighting cause that was so sad, but it was just, like, at least it was clear. You know? And the older I got I realized that Jesus gives us a great gift, the gift of transparency, the gift of His humanity and the gift to ask the question. So we have a right to say, "Can this pass? Can this blue season in my life, can these blues issues change? Can the...can they...can it pass? Do I have to drink of the bitter cup?" And God, in His amazing grace and mercy says sometimes, "Yes, you don't have to drink of the bitter cup." But more times than often, we have to do as Jesus, to drink of that bitter cup. And more importantly, the most powerful one is that it really was the action that came after the question. And He got up and walked towards the cross. So you...you know, I talked about how I...I lived in a...a...a very turbulent community, but that I didn't feel fearful. And so Jesus teaches us that in the season of our blues that we can walk towards...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...the fear and that He has overcome that, that He has gone before us, that He walks alongside of us and that He promises never to leave us. I would say the one last thing is that even at 19, after seeing this powerful Christian work, I didn't want to ride my parents' coattails. I didn't wanna \_\_\_\_\_ daughter of a Baptist preacher. You know, I wanted to know Jesus...





**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...for myself. And I remember the day I gave my life to Him, so that was clear. And I took some time to really examine and study other religions. My mother was furious and upset and praying all the time, like, "Lord, don't..." You know?

**Elisa:** That's honest, yep.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** My...my...my father was excited cause he knew his daughters. Probably if the younger or the older was doing it he would be upset. But he kind of knew that probably for me, you know, being so artistic that I needed to understand the struggle, right? And...

**Elisa:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** But I asked that question, "What kind of God could I not believe in?" And time and time again it came back to I cannot, for me, believe in a god who hasn't suffered. A god...

**Eryn:** Right.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...who allowed suffering, but hasn't walked that path of suffering and this...

**Eryn:** Right.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...hasn't endured the blues and has become the blues. So then I understand, yes, we walk through the fire and not be burned. The water will rise, but not overflow us or drown us. And so then I would say to my precious sisters out there, hold on. Hold on. Ask the question. I'm so glad He asked the question, "Can this pass?" But at the same time, have that active hope. In every blues line there's a glimmer of hope. And that hope is active. And to walk towards...with all you can by the grace of God. And that season will pass. On this side or on the other side.

[music]

**Eryn:** Yes.

[music]

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** That's the blessed hope.



[music]

**Elisa:** And when we come back Ruth Naomi Floyd talks us through ways in which we can all use our own blues experiences to advocate for those women who feel unseen and unheard. And she'll also share an incredibly inspiring story about intentionally finding beauty during moments of dehumanization. This is *God Hears Her*.

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**Eryn:** If you're a fan of this podcast, sign up for our *God Hears Her* email newsletter and find even more inspiration and encouragement from women just like you. These weekly emails are filled with stories you can relate to and other fun goodies that will brighten up your walk with Jesus. Go to [godhearsher.org](http://godhearsher.org) and sign up today. That's [godhearsher.org](http://godhearsher.org). Now back to the show.

**Elisa:** Could we turn it just a second...

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Sure.

**Elisa:** ...and look at, how do we use our voices when we do feel strong or clear to advocate for those women...

**Eryn:** Yes.

**Elisa:** ...who are unseen and unheard? That's a huge part of your life, is to speak out...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...against injustice and to become a truth teller, I think, is...is...is how you've described it for society, of society. What if we turn our voice, using our own blues, but to speak out on behalf of others, especially women, who are feeling unseen and unheard to advocate that their voices be heard?

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Sure. I mean I think there's several ways we can do it. You know, I think, you know, with terms like activist, protestor, those things, some of our personalities don't lend ourselves to that kind of activity. We've seen the power of protest and Protestantism and...and the power of...of righteous rage and deep lament and...and what that has birthed. But, you know, I think we have to think sometimes creatively of...of how to do that. So it...sometimes it's in simple acts of being present. In my HIV work, in the beginning when this...

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**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...deadly disease first hit...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...it was actually not a lot of words, of just showing up. You know, sometimes continuing to show up is...is activism, is encouraging voices. And when you're able to and you feel called to...to really, in small, creative ways, to speak up. And, you know, comes back to part of, like, who is my neighbor? Who is not my neighbor? Who do I believe is not...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...my neighbor? And so I think as Jesus did, sit at the feet of those, of our precious sisters, who are still deemed invisible in 2021, who still are preferred to be humans...for those humans to be voiceless and to, like you said, to speak and you can use the arts, you can do ministry, you can do that... I'm just amazed...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...at the women of the Bible, how creatively they were able to do that, from lamenting with each other to encouraging each other and to standing up, at times, forcefully...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...using their words. So I think it begins with really being willing and serious and sobering about wanting to speak up. Then asking the Lord how that should be done and then be creative in ways to do that. I think, too, is also a providing for me is providing and creating areas so that the women, themselves, can speak. So I'm not viewed as a martyr or a savior or the spokesperson, that I'm creating avenues and spaces for them if they so are ready and willing and...and in a place to speak for themselves. So I think themes of access are important and privilege in the way that we...some of us are privileged that we're able to pass on that privilege to them. And I think more than anything else is sitting at the feet of these women, whatever their issues are, whatever blues they're going through, is being silent and maybe not speaking, but listening and sitting...

**Elisa:** Yeah.



**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...at the feet of where they are. And then when able to speak, do so and then in turn, turn around and give them an opportunity to speak and advocate for themselves.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** So I'm talking about empowerment...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...too.

**Eryn:** So good.

**Elisa:** You've said, "I believe each generation has a responsibility to take what is best from the generations that preceded them and to build on it to create something new." And I hear that in...in who you are. You know, you have a real ability and a passion to listen well to others. And then to seek God's guidance for what it means for you to add on to that. I...I think many of us women are...are hesitant to bring our building skills. Maybe we're hesitant to bring our evaluative skills to even see what's been done before us. But I think then even if we do, we get hesitant. We think, "Well, I don't have anything to contribute here." Or, "Pft, you know, I got nothing." And you've been able to look at what your parents did, your father laying down his badge and picking up a Bible, your mother with great wisdom, uniquely parenting each of her daughters and...with the music skills and...and other things. But then you, then, listened and watched what your generations ahead of you built and now you've created and built a...a great contribution. You were empowered to do that. So...so maybe as we...as we have this chat right here in this moment, how can you speak to empower that woman, who's hesitant to build on anything? She just thinks, "What do I have to build with?"

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** You know, God, as the artist, knows He is faithful of generation after generation to generation. I think for me, even with my parents and even with their commitment and sacrifice, to give us music, to help us to understand that what we're doing when we're not in front of a mic or playing or creating music, is equally important. I...it really wasn't... And I believe that in every family there's someone. So one way that has empowered me has been my father's great-grandmother. You know, she was an enslaved African. She was 6 feet, 2 inches tall, taller than anyone in her neighboring communities. To make an example of her, her master made her become a human mule. So from 4:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day she would get up and strap on the straps and pull the plow. I don't know that there's many things worse example of dehumanization than being made to be a mule. It obviously isn't productive, cause a mule could be faster. But it was...



**Eryn:** Right.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...to break her in every way. And she died at age 28.

**Elisa:** Oh.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Her spine in the shape of a S, in excruciating pain. But one of the things that my father's grandmother remembered...who lived to be 109. And I was tied to her apron strings. I loved her more than any human in the world. And she just would say, "Who's this child that doesn't want to go out and play?" I would beg to go over to her house. She taught me how to churn butter, how to make bread, how to dress a table, how to garden. And I finally got her, one afternoon, to talk about her mother, which was very hard for her. And she told me the story of where... She didn't remember this, but her brothers and sisters...older brothers said that coming from the place of where she was dehumanized, that field, walking back to her cabin, she would search for beauty. And so that whether it was a pinecone, a blade of grass, a stick, a flower, she would pick it up and bring it into the cabin and put it on the table. You know what they would call the butcher's block back then, that her husband had made out of wood. Her siblings remember her saying, "Here's beauty." I...I... All of us have been treated and devalued. And I don't know how, walking that short distance, you look for beauty. I know that that was birthed in me. And so I'm an emancipatory artist. What that means is that I seek to tell the truth and that I seek to chase after beauty, ultimately, the most beautiful One, Jesus. So I would say our sisters out there, that look to our Father Who created \_\_\_\_\_, He made us beautifully and wonderfully made, in His image, fully woman and fully female. But then also He is the faithful One of generation to generation. And in your own history, I think there are many examples of great women that have done it in quiet ways. Had it not been the history that was passed down, I would never know this. And...and use an example. And then also the women in the Bible are so diverse and so fierce and so amazing and different personalities and different strengths. And so lean on our biblical sisters. And in each example we can find a way to reflect light, to emancipate those from the darkness, to comfort those, to walk alongside and to empower. Empower. You know, in ancient times, you know, for instance, if what my sister was going through, a neighbor was going through, a tough time of lamenting and the blues and felt not empowered and just was riddled with grief and sadness. I would, you know, leave my tent, go to the marketplace, buy a bottle, and go into the...her tent and sit with her and collect her tears in the bottle. Pray with her, sing with her. And then go back to my tent and do whatever I need to do. But every time I would look at that bottle, I would remember the grief of my friend, and I would stop and pray or cry. So I didn't have to be in her presence. So sometimes really the...a radical act is committing to pray, is committing to lament in...when you're in the presence of our sisters or when you're not. Remembering them before the Lord. Remember that your sisters, Jesus said, and that...and that God says, "I remember those tears. I collect your tears, and I care. And I...I..."

**Eryn:** Yeah.



**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...treasure them.” And so there’s different ways for different personalities and different women in different walks in life. Yes, prayer is a act, a radical act of protest against the darkness. Um, sending flowers, sending a meal. And equally standing up and...against, you know, power and saying, “No.” So all those things. I think sometimes we think of those amazing women in history that stood up and did this. But also there’s quiet women behind the scenes...

**Eryn:** Yes.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...being obedient and doing what God’s called them to do. You think of Ester,. You know, she...

**Eryn:** Yes.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** ...could start a campaign, “I am Jewish, and we are not going to stand for this.” Quietly going around, praying and had a community praying and fasting. And then changing the heart of the king, which God ultimately did, obviously. So, yeah. It sounds very simple, but it’s really powerful.

**Eryn:** Yes. And what you said. I remember the story that you were sharing earlier about someone would bring lemonade and...

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...“We would serve lemonade to each other as we were cleaning...

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yeah, yeah.

**Elisa:** ...the granite.”

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** And I think that we can minimize our actions and...and not think that those small gestures are actually so impactful in our communities, but they are. And I just love that you...you’re empowering not just big, boisterous acts, where everybody sees out in the open, but then the quiet and the quiet I think God just honors...He honors both.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** And I...I really feel like it starts inward. So we as sisters, if we would value each other, if we would see beauty, if we would empower with kind words, if the world would see Christian



women come together and be united of empowering and speaking over them with truth and love, man, they would be knocking our church doors down just on that alone. We would teaching our husbands, our fathers, our pastors, our sons, our nephews through action without one word spoken to them.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** That this is who we are. We are the King's daughter. We are valued. Just by the way we would treat each other. And then for those that are struggling with, you know, self-image and lack of confident, if we would know that God made us in His image and really understand and do a study of what \_\_\_\_\_ means. That too. But I think we can start as sisters and then move outward. But that alone is the Gospel and would invite so many to come. Our sisters who have not embraced Christ in the cross, if they could see that among their Christian friends, it would be revolutionary.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** I was able to capture just a little snippet of you making a presentation. And you have this way of preaching and singing and moving back and forth between mediums that made the message you were giving so powerful. And I could never do it. Like I said, I can't even sing *Happy Birthday*. But, you know, could you...could you speak...speak to us right now, Eryn and myself and everybody else who's with us right now, in that kind of a medium where you go back and forth a bit? And...and give us...give us a word. Would you do that, my sister?

**Ruth Naomi Floyd:** Sure. Our God will never leave us, nor forsake us. He goes before us and alongside of us. And so in these troubling times, in the blues seasons of our life He is present. He hears His daughters. He understands, and He will answer. It may take a while. It may be in the midnight hour, but He will answer. [Singing] Oh, Lord, trouble so hard. Oh, Lord, trouble so hard. Don't know nobody know my trouble but God. Don't nobody know my trouble but God. I went up the hill the other day. \_\_\_\_\_ so got happy. And I'll stayed all day. I'm crying. Oh, Lord, trouble so hard. Oh, Lord, trouble so hard. Don't nobody know my trouble but God. Don't nobody know my trouble but God. Don't nobody know my trouble but God. Don't nobody know my trouble but God. Don't nobody know my trouble but God.

[music]

**Elisa:** *God Hears Her* is a production of Our Daily Bread Ministries.