



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 47 - Jesus, Justice and Women

Elisa Morgan and Eryn Eddy with Tiffany Bluhm

[Music]

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[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 for you today on *God Hears Her*.

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

Eryn: And I'm Eryn Eddy, and I'm curious. Have you ever found yourself in a place where you feel convicted to stand up for someone who's being oppressed? Or you feel a strong desire to be an advocate for them, but you can't seem to find your voice. On this episode of *God Hears Her*, Tiffany Bluhm joins us to explore the path of finding your voice when we find ourselves in a place of injustice. And she'll share her own journey of how she found her place in Jesus, justice, and women.

Elisa: But first, here's some info on Tiffany. Tiffany Bluhm is the author of *She Dreams* and *Never Alone* and their companion Bible studies. She's co-host of the podcast *Why Tho?* and leads an engaged audience of followers online. She's committed to encouraging people of faith to with conviction and substance and grace, and you will definitely hear that in her voice today. As a minority immigrant woman with an interracial family, Tiffany is passionate about inviting all to the table of faith in equality and justice and dignity. So let's get to this conversation. This is Tiffany Bluhm on *God Hears Her*.

Elisa: Tiffany, before we dig into the powerful message of your book *Prey Tell*, I would love to get to know your story. Would you mind sharing just a little bit about you with us and our listeners.



Tiffany: Yeah, so for those of you who probably cannot tell by my voice, I'm East Indian and I was adopted just shy of my second birthday, and growing up in rural Washington where I didn't meet another person of color until I was in middle school, I definitely had this...

Elisa: Wow.

Tiffany: ...isolated experience where, you know, you already have these adoptee questions like was I wanted? Why am I here? Why don't I have my momma? You know, all those things you feel and then also coming to grips that I was just brown and being in a space and not only Indian and being and...and grieving and missing my first culture, but also being brown, and so it really made me questions like "why am I here and who's plan was this?" And so I would say it was a childhood of wondering and wishing why my life was this way and then in middle school I was invited to a youth ministry at a little country church by a gal who I had known since like third grade, and we went and I remember this youth pastor in this multipurpose room with like 15 kids talking about the love of Jesus, and he was so convincing and I thought to myself, "If this is real, I'll give my whole life to this."

Elisa: Mmm.

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: This will be my everything. I'll spend myself for the rest of my days on Jesus.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: And it changed everything because I never felt Indian or belonging in dominant culture, especially Indian in America, and certainly not after 9/11...

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: ...and then even as an adult, my opportunity to go to India, I never felt Indian in India, but I always felt welcome in the kingdom.

Eryn: Hmm.

Elisa: Huh.



Tiffany: I always like I found my place, and I knew who I was and I was convinced of the love and grace and mercy and faithfulness of our God.

Elisa: How did that happen for you? How did you become convinced of that, because I think we all really long for that, and what...

Eryn: Yeah. Yeah.

Elisa: ...you're presenting are these really understandable, set-apartnesses, you know, distinctiveness...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...that you might not fit in, but you're saying when your youth pastor expressed this...this great story of God's love for you, somehow you were able to absorb that differently.

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: Yeah, it...it was so counterculture than any message I had ever heard.

Elisa: Ah.

Tiffany: You know, the message being in a rural town where everybody is very much thinking and talking and looking and dressing the same way, to hear this first century Jewish man who loved everyone and everyone was equal, not just on paper, but in practice...

Eryn: Wow.

Tiffany: ...and so it was completely different than what I experienced in my everyday life and I mean this is also, you know, [Laughing] the early nineties, the advent of the internet. There wasn't like I had access to information and stories and or even the library where I could learn of stories of women in history...

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: ...who might not have been part of the dominant culture, but they were brave and courageous and knew who they were because of Jesus was...

Elisa: Okay.



Tiffany: ...and so...so just devouring the Scriptures and seeing both the Old and New Testament through the light of salvation and through the light of His resurrection, I'll tell you what, it changed everything. It was this whole new normal for me.

Eryn: Wow.

Tiffany: And it gave me a worldview that was so different than the one I had that, again, it was...it became the safe space. It became a safe place. Home wasn't the easiest place growing up. There's just a...a lot hardship there...

Elisa: Mmm.

Tiffany: ...and ah...and so Jesus, and even just the people who represented Him because this safe place, became the healthy place,...

Eryn: Mmm.

Tiffany: ...became a place where I could come as I was and share my burdens and really it was adults who gave me a vision for what could be, because I didn't have that at home. So it was...it was really, really truly an exciting change that...that was...it was the best thing about my life was who Jesus was...

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: ...and He just wasn't going to fail me. He was...He was everything He said He was going to be.

Eryn: How did your faith continue to evolve once you had that moment? Or what was it that was fostering this love for Jesus and learning more about who He is in your life?

Tiffany: Yeah. I think the catalyst honestly was having other adults who saw my raw skills, gifts, talents, and passion and called greatness out of me.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: So I think that truly the catalyst of somebody seeing me and saying, "I see...I see who you are and I see where you could be," and so to really have that greatness called out of me in the most beautiful way. That's just discipleship, we all know that, but it was really beautiful to follow them as they followed



Christ and have such a beautiful model and to see it lived out in their life. To see not charisma but character...

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: ...and that formation and their willingness to stick with it. They did for one, what they wished they could do for everyone. And so to have somebody...I was a cheerleader in high school, showing up at my games and constantly checking in. So just...just walking alongside me, showing up. Their anthem for all of these mentors who were part of this youth ministry was they called them their chase list. We will chase after you. We will not give up on you.

Elisa: Wow!

Tiffany: And so it wasn't just like the kids who were popular or the kids who clearly had a gifting were mentored or disciplined. There was no man left behind. Truly everyone who was a part of this youth ministry was in a system where they were matched with a mentor, where they had somebody showing up in their lives, obviously texting was nothing yet, calling them, checking in. "How are you doing? What...do you need to talk about anything? What can we be praying about?"

Elisa: Wow.

Tiffany: Um "How...how are you doing with your time with the Lord? Is there something that's holding you back or is there a book you need or a resource you need? How can we resource you?" So it truly was the most beautiful, ordinary discipleship. It wasn't like this "ah ha" moment of life "Oh my gosh!" it was just the ordinary faithfulness of those walking toward Christ and me following them, and then being provided opportunity to stretch my legs, flap my wings, and learn how to walk in the goodness and the mercy and the actions of Jesus—serving others and opportunities to teach and opportunities to lead and, again, it gave me this vision, a holistic vision of what I saw when Jesus encountered women in the New Testament. The way He emboldened women. The way He unleashed women. It opened up something in me that set in motion my life when I was 13, 14 that I'm still walking in 20 years later.

Elisa: Wow. And who listening doesn't A. want that. You know, someone to...to chase after them.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: And...and B. understand that we can chase after others for God. You know, both of those roles are so vital, and truly, I can hear, Tiffany, how much you've been shaped by that process. Um you...you talk



about how Jesus chased after women in the New Testament, and I'm hearing that, you know, the...the transition of being chased after by a human discipler here to Jesus chasing after you...yourself. You know, take us forward in your life and...and how Jesus has wooed you forward, chased after you, and continued to be your safe place as you have responded to Him.

Tiffany: Yeah, honestly it's in those quiet moments, Elisa, it's in those quiet moments of study and just allowing the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures and...and just getting just this beautiful robust landscape and vision for women, and so as my faith grew and as my grip on justice tightened, there was this intersection and I found myself okay, I found my place. It's Jesus, it's justice, and it's women.

Eryn: Hmm.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: This is where I want to spend myself. This is where I want to pour into. This is what I want to push toward. You know when I think of the woman who was caught in adultery, the fact that Jesus protected her body and her reputation over His own, that speaks volumes, and I think, you know, we look at the woman with the issue of blood, the way Jesus protected her physical body in that moment and calls her daughter, something that was so rare, you know, for Him to even identify someone as a family member in the first century was just not common, you know. And...and so just constantly seeing how He treated women; it was just this...and then seeing that dissonant reality in our modern day of man I'm not seeing women treated with that kindness or respect or that care or that compassion. Maybe, you know, when I was in school or in my early twenties or in the work place, and I also grew up in the Purity Culture Movement, and I've got to be honest, I gleaned a lot from it. I think I walked into marriage with some beauty and some values and some understanding of what it would look to have my needs met and meet the needs of my spouse, so I honestly gleaned a lot, and I think it gave me...it...it prevented me just dating bad dudes honestly. But then there's the flipside of that where the messaging that was skewed saying women are responsible to control men's thoughts or if...if something bad happened, it's because you had a part in it. What you wore, how you carried yourself, how you spoke, those kind of things, you know. So seeing the inconsistency there, but also seeing beautiful marriages modeled to me and the Scriptures give us such clear indication of how Jesus treated women and how and how He protected their bodies and how He invited all of us to consider our own thoughts and our own actions and take responsibility for our own ways. So, again, it just put me on this trajectory of what would it look like to bring heaven to earth in a way that honors Jesus and follows in His footsteps of how He loved and served women as I felt so loved and served by Him.

Eryn: Mm hmm.



Tiffany: I...I this is still what I'm going to bet my life on.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: Is who Jesus is. So it really...it gave me this God-sized confidence because I...I love the bride and I'm...this hasn't been some stray from the faith, although, you know, in my work I critique...I critique how we have messaged Jesus. How we have weaponized Scripture against women, because the honest truth is the imbalances of power we see in our world are the leading factor to derail a woman's faith, her career, her financial standing, and her reputation.

Elisa: Whoa!

Eryn: I see that. Yes.

Tiffany: We see that in Scripture, and we certainly see that in our modern day.

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: Interesting.

Eryn: That is so beautifully said. And what I love about what you're sharing Tiffany is you are addressing this false God-print, this false...

Tiffany: Yeah.

Eryn: ...print of who Jesus is, and you're addressing that He is a pursuer and He's a protector.

Tiffany: That's right.

Elisa: Hmm, and so your work today is...is about that area...maybe tell us a little bit about what...what your work is...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...but also tell us how God began to woo you and shape you as an offering in this cause...



Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...of justice and women.

Tiffany: Yeah, so I'll start with your first question there. A little bit about what I do. I...I wear a few hats.

Elisa: Okay.

Tiffany: I'm the cohost of the *Why Tho* podcast, answering the existential questions we ask ourselves with the fellow author, Ashley Abercrombie.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: And then I have spent most of my adult life writing and speaking to women, so...

Elisa: Okay.

Tiffany: ...I locally I lead a ministry called "Sit." We meet at a restaurant. It started out with about 12 gals. Now we serve about 500 women a year. The chef prepares all of our food and matches our wine and we teach and break bread together and pray over one another, and it really has been a sacred space in something...

Elisa: Oh wow.

Tiffany: ...so beautiful for women to refresh their soul. And in addition to that, writing books and Bible studies, again addressing these heartfelt issues that so many of us encounter—of isolation and rejection and desire and dreaming and what does it look like to...to partner with the Divine to see your dreams come to pass. And, of course, it's a little bit of hard right turn on my latest title, addressing again these imbalances of power that we see in sacred spaces.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: So it really...all of this has come out of saying yes to Jesus, and I have...I do have one specific experience that really was a formative for me.

Elisa: Okay.



Tiffany: About almost 15 years ago, I was just having some time with the Lord before I was heading into work. I was working in ministry at the time, and I felt the Lord said, “You know, this place is overrun with giants, but even the Promised Land is overrun with giants. And if you can see the beauty of what can be here, if you can rise up to take this moment, this Promised Land is one that can flourish and...and I think women are going to benefit.”

Elisa: Okay, just...just pause for a second there. We don't have to get into all the specifics, but you're working in a job in a nonprofit, in a ministry, so you're not writing your books, you're not speaking right now, you're not doing zip. You're a part of a system,...

Tiffany: Yeah, right.

Elisa: ...of a ministry system, which many of us have, you know, been on staff...

Tiffany: Yeah.

Elisa:in various...so that's what you're talking about. And as your...your time with God, He speaks to you about the giants in the land, which is a...amazing metaphor...

Eryn: Yeah, I love that. I love that yeah.

Elisa: ...that we see in Scripture, but God speaks to you and...and say again what He said as you're a person on staff in a ministry.

Tiffany: Yeah, totally. So, you know, thinking Moses and the Promised Land and, you know, when the spies reported back, they were like, “It's overrun with giants.” They couldn't see the promise that God had...that God had given them. They couldn't see...

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: ...that they had to be a participant in taking...it wasn't going to be handed to them. And so it was just this invitation for me to join the great work and knowing that it was going to be costly and there was clearly fear involved if He's talking to me about giants, and I'm thinking...

Elisa: Right.

Tiffany: ...where are we going with this, Lord? [Laughing] What are we doing with this?



Eryn: What is happening!

Tiffany: Yeah, exactly. And it was that moment of like, “I’m saying ‘yes’ to you Lord, but should I be nervous?” You know, should I be nervous to say “yes” if I...if I’m going to go and see that this, you know, these giants of...of fear and these shadow images and these shadow figures that I’m nervous about. You know, “What are you talking about, Lord?”

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: And months after that, I with some friends started a ministry where we reached out to women who had been sexually exploited and were in the sex industry, and then that led to creating programs and partnering with the Crime Stoppers and the FBI...

Elisa: Oh wow.

Tiffany: ...and local police to address men who picked up women and women who were going through rehab and just all of these things just started coming together, and I definitely have an entrepreneur spirit, and seeing how the Lord just brought the right people together, but it was still this saying “yes” and being like what on earth have I got myself into?

Elisa: Yeah.

Tiffany: I just signed up to disciple people and preach the gospel and just the way in which I was able to do that. The way I was able to preach the gospel through my actions was a...was a beautiful moment. And that...that was many, many moons ago, and it has been just such a beautiful journey of serving women and spending myself on behalf of women in one way or another.

Eryn: Hmm.

[Music]

Eryn: And when we come back, Tiffany shares with us her own personal story of choosing between her loyalty to her convictions and her loyalty to an institution while also experiencing the complex dynamics of power and abuse in the ministry. That’s coming up on *God Hears Her*.

[Music]



Elisa: If you haven't already joined the *God Hears Her* email newsletter, now is the perfect time. Sign up today and we'll send you a free digital e-booklet called *Longing to Love Us*. You'll see how one woman came to understand the personal love of her heavenly Father and how He lavishly loves each one of us as well. Go to godhearsher.org and sign up today. That's godhearsher.org. Now back to the show.

Elisa: Now as I understand it, Tiffany, you've had some personal interactions on this topic that you feel like the Lord's called you for to take this up yourself. I mean, you're no longer with that ministry or whatever. This is why you're speaking and writing and stuff, but can you take us through God maybe specifically said, "Tiffany, you do need to fight these giants in the land..."

Tiffany: Yeah.

Elisa: ...and you...you needed to take some steps in order to respond to that wooing...

Tiffany: Yeah.

Elisa: ...that He gave you.

Tiffany: Yeah, I think there comes a time in our lives where we can make excuses until we can't. We can make excuses for other people's behavior, and I'm definitely a glass half-full, believe the best in everybody, even when they don't deserve it. Very diplomatic. Very agreeable. Ah not people-pleasing because I want you to like me, but people-pleasing just so everyone can get along, and this belief that women matter and this belief that women should be empowered and...and enjoy the equity that God designed them to have really was between a rock and a hard place. That...my loyalty to my conviction and my loyalty to an institution was challenged.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: And so when I...when I discovered an unpopular truth that would make waves and rock the boat, I thought to myself, "If I rock this boat, I'm either going to fall overboard or they're going to throw me out."

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: And I wasn't wrong...I wasn't wrong. And so and many of us we find ourselves in these situations where we're like, we've played by all the rules. We've done everything set out for us. We've stayed faithful



and now something's happened and it wasn't at our hand. It didn't happen because we made it happen, but we're still paying the consequences for it.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: And so then we're like, "Okay, Lord, what do we do now? Where do we go with this?" And so for me, it was this moment of okay, I'm going to stay silent because that feels holy and it's an act of self-preservation.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: But in reality, I was failing the sisters in my world, the women in my world, when I held something silent because I had proximity to power, because I benefited from this broken system, because I just didn't want to be on...in the shooting range, you know, I didn't want to be the target. So I...I stayed silent and in reality, I...I really did a disservice to the sisters in my world.

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: So it came to understanding loyalty to conviction had to override my loyalty to an institution, my loyalty to the people around me if it was...if it was perpetuating this...a broken space...

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: ...and if it was hurting and harming others and...and especially if it's hurting and harming others in the name of God.

Eryn: Yeah. I'd love, Tiffany, for you to unpack that for me. The struggle with your loyalty to an institution versus your loyalty to your convictions.

Tiffany: Yeah, we all walk around with our value system, right? Of what we think is right and what we think is wrong in the world, that orthodoxy with our orthopraxis of right living with right belief, and when those are out of alignment, I think we have some problems there. So when we see something, when we see a woman harmed, whether it's in places we work or worship, we have a decision. We think, "Okay, not my circus, not my monkeys," or is it my ethical, moral and Christian obligation to say something when I see a woman feeling less than. When I feel I'm seeing her treated as second. When I see that there's...she's covered up and something's not right and she's feelings small. What do I do? And so I think we all have to ask ourselves that question, which I...I was the bystander in my experience when



somebody came to me with information of the very worst kind and I...I could stay silent or I could speak up and lose my place in the power grid or I could...

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: ...and out this person and put her through something that could be hellacious or...and put myself through it as well, so it was just this like, "What do I do? What do I do? I'm in this rock and hard place, so what do I do?"

Eryn: Mm hmm.

Tiffany: So it was understanding that as much as I value my place in an institution, in whatever system you find yourself in, you...you know, your church, your job, the gym, your playgroup, whatever system you find yourself in, if you see something that's inherently wrong and you know it's wrong and you stay silent, you become complicit in that action. And that diminishes the act and the will and the hope of the Lord in that moment, because so often we are the good news wherever we go, right? We're the good news wherever we go. And so when we diminish that in and we look the other way, when we turn our back, I think of, you know, the good Samaritan how he was...he...many who...who knew, who knew as the right thing to do was, passed over. They're right belief didn't match their right living...

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: ...in that moment. But then the Samaritan comes along and he leverages his own resources, his own donkey, and he uses what he has to enter the goodness for somebody who couldn't even do anything for him back.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: There...there was a crossroad that I'm hearing that you can to, and I really respect your vulnerability in expressing it, Tiffany, because um my eyes have just been opened more recently. You said, "I was benefitting from the very system that was causing oppression."

Tiffany: Yeah.

Elisa: Or injustice, I'm not sure what your exact words were there, but you said, "I was benefitting from..."

Tiffany: Yeah.



Elisa: ...the very system,” and I think that’s a...that’s when we can just completely miss...

Tiffany: Yep.

Elisa: ...um when we’re benefitting. We can miss it in racial injustice. We can miss it in gender injustice. In pay, in class injustice.

Tiffany: That’s right.

Elisa: You name it. And while we’re benefitting, others maybe deeply being wounded and...and I so respect that you’ve included this in your um God’s call to you to speak up. Because sometimes...sometimes we actually have to speak up and get in the flow in the opposite direction, you know, stand in the middle of it, but sometimes we actually have to sacrifice our own comfort,...

Tiffany: That’s right.

Elisa: ...our own position or um benefit, you know...

Tiffany: Mm yeah.

Elisa: ...for the sake of others where there’s injustice.

Eryn: Yean.

Tiffany: Yeah, it’s costly, isn’t it?

Elisa: Yeah.

Tiffany: I think of um, you know, I think of the Suffrage Movement. A hundred years ago, white women largely shaped that movement and they wouldn’t let their black sisters march with them. They made the black sisters go to the end of the line, and they couldn’t see how the intersection of race and gender was also part of this fight, and so, you see how they wanted to shape that narrative. We want what our brothers and our fathers had, which wasn’t a bad thing. They wanted equality in the workplace and to be seen as valuable contributors to society, but so did their black and brown sisters.

Elisa: Oh Lord have mercy!



Tiffany: And so...

Elisa: Yes. Yes.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: So...so we think about now and we think about the opportunity, especially among women to lock arms and to serve and listen and to lament with one another and to bring change, because change in this area of gender and equality has one come when women have locked arms with each other. You see that in marches. You see that in movements. You see that in policy. You see that in churches. Not...not a lone woman, but when women see the inherent value in one another, because I think that there's a unique harm when women defend men who've harmed women...

Eryn: Yes.

Tiffany: ...and they're pitted against each other and I...I explore that a lot in *Prey Tell* and just how resourced women benefit, as you mentioned, benefit from systems that can harm minority women and benefit from systems that where...where they're seen as valuable and where they're seen as ah reputable, so it is something that, you know, imbalance of power is happening in everyplace we operate in and every system in the world, but it's response is varied.

Eryn: Mmm.

Tiffany: It's response is varied so what color skin you have, your...your resources, your privilege, your reputation, and the gospel what we know of Jesus demands a response of complete compassion and care and...and vulnerability and strength, and so again it was after studying, and honestly a previous study that I wrote, of Jesus's encounter with women was what spurred me on to address this issue.

Eryn: Mmm.

Tiffany: Because I think so many women just don't have the vernacular and they don't have that understanding of well how did we get here in the first place?

Eryn: Yeah.



Tiffany: How did we from the first century to this modern day twist Jesus's words and weaponized Scripture to make women feel small?

Elisa: Hmm.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: And how can we right that cultural wrong um through a biblical lens?

Eryn: Ah.

Elisa: I wonder if you could even give an example of where we might slip into weaponizing Scripture. That's a powerful phrase, Tiffany. Do you have an example of that?

Tiffany: Oh yeah. I have several. I think one that comes to mind right now is 1 Samuel 26, where we see David talking to Abishai, his armor bearer, and his armor bearer saying, "I can take King Saul out right here in this cave. We can do this done deal," and king says, you know, "Don't touch him." And this idea of don't touch the Lord's anointed has been taken out of context to mean that those who are anointed or appointed are immune from dissent.

Eryn: Hmm.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: We cannot critique their character and in reality...

Eryn: That's so good.

Tiffany: ...David, before he was king, was talking about do not cause bodily harm to a sitting king, but the way we've taken that and have been able to slap it over pastors and politicians and any man with a semblance of power and say, "You can't touch the Lord's anointed," saying "You can't critique here. You can't accuse here. This will hold no weight, because we'll hold up his accolades over your accusations."

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: And we...we constantly bend that narrative to ah we don't, we don't do this here. That's not how it works. And you see that...that first century Greco-Roman influence that...that infiltrated the early church



that said, you know, women are deformed men. Women are inherently evil. You know, women couldn't testify in court in the first century, because it was believed that there was fear of loss or punishment or they would only speak for a personal gain,...

Eryn: Right.

Tiffany: ...and yet Jesus placed the message of the resurrection on a woman's shoulders, the testimony that would change the rest of the world. He specifically waited 'till the disciples had left the tomb to reveal Himself, so we clearly see that...

Elisa: Wow.

Tiffany: ...He was speaking...

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: ...to that issue of that time and that day and how it would ripple throughout history, and so then again, you know, I mean could go into history, but you bring in the time of the printing press and that...that belief and that implicit bias against women was disseminated not just from the pulpit, but in teachings that were read in homes and the Industrial Revolution where women were treated as second because they weren't resourced to...to keep the ball going and industry flowing.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: And again in our modern day. So that don't touch the Lord's anointed one is one used probably more than anything else, or even, you know, I think of when a...when a woman does come forward to speak up and talk about harm that's maybe happened in her home or, you know, at the hands of her parents or her husband or her pastor or her boss or anything like that, and we say, "We need two or more witnesses...we need two or more witnesses," 1 Timothy. "Two or more witnesses." And what they're asking for is two or more victims, because...

Elisa: Huh.

Tiffany: ...there's usually more than enough witnesses.

Elisa: One isn't enough.



Eryn: Yeah, exactly.

Elisa: Mm hmm.

Tiffany: One isn't enough and...and we wait...well we need to see that this person has a pattern of harm and we hold up one man's testimony and we'll wait until there's several women's testimony. Wait 'till we have a clear...

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: ...proven pattern of abusive power and it's like my goodness, if Jesus held up one woman's testimony, so must we.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: So must we.

Eryn: That's right. I think about how it says in 2 Timothy how the Lord did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

Tiffany: Mm hmm.

Eryn: And I think that He gives us a spirit of power, of love, and a sound mind not when things are going justly, but when there's injustice.

Tiffany: Right.

Elisa: Hmm.

Eryn: And I love seeing that that is so apparent in your story. That you continue to respond to these giants out of a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind through the Lord. And I would love to know what you would share with a woman listening right now that feels the spirit of fear and...and is maybe experiencing some form of just injustice and feeling unseen in her circumstance, feeling judged, feeling like she has to fight for her voice to be heard.

Elisa: Oppressed. Oppressed, yeah. Mm hmm.



Eryn: Oppressed. Um what would you share with her in...in her feelings of that right now?

Tiffany: Yeah. I think fear is a flashing red light that there's a lack of love.

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: When I think of that passage love, a sound mind, a power, it's the opposite of fear. We have been given what we need to conquer and fear is visceral. Fear demands the best of you and...and fear and...and worry that comes from fear, it feels oddly productive because it takes so much...

Elisa: Mmm.

Tiffany: ...emotional capacity from you.

Elisa: That's interesting, yeah.

Eryn: That's so true.

Tiffany: It feel...it feels...and so to stop in that moment and remember whose you are and whose walking with you and the goodness and mercy that quite literally follows you, follows you wherever you go, know that you're not alone, because these isolating moments when you feel like something's not right and the fear feel all-consuming, you feel like alone...like just alone. I think that there's nothing worse than feeling alone, and I think first remember who goes with you, and I think second, allow others that love you to lend their strength.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: Because when we go through something hard, chances are we're more likely to call a girlfriend before we're going to call our small group leader or our pastor or HR or anybody like that. We're going to call our friend.

Eryn: Mm hmm.

Tiffany: And so for those listening, you might not be the person going through that. You might be the person who's going to get that call to lend your strength and to do so without judgment, because what we often do y'all is we hold how we think we would respond to a situation over how somebody actually in their traumatic moment is responding through their fear. Fear rewires us. In my own life I feared running



into this person who abused his power so severely I avoided coffee shops, restaurants for like 2 years. I...I just hung out at home. I was a homebody is in the name of fear.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: Because I so feared what this person could do for me and do to me, and that's what fear does, right? It projects it...it's the shadow figures. These shadows, you know, I think when you think a shadow, it's way bigger than the person actually standing there. You know, my kids love to play in the shadow, because their legs look so long and their arms look so long and they look so fierce, and I think that's what fear does. It projects bigger than it really is.

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: It's a dog that has a...that thinks he's bigger than he is and he might just be little Chihuahua, you know. [Laughing]

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: And so calling fear for what it is, and I think even just speaking over fear, "For you have no place over me."

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: "You have no power over me." And inviting the Lord into that moment, because my fear led to a lot of anxiety.

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: Because nobody wants to be in a hard season. Nobody is going looking for hard seasons. None of us look for that.

Eryn: Right.

Tiffany: As women we're just trying to get by and pay them bills and find the shortest line at Trader Joe's and with our friends and raise them babies. We're not looking for our life to be blown to bits and for that fear to grip us, but the reality is fear's a monster and it's one to be fought with love...



Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: ...and power and a sound mind.

Eryn: Mmm.

Elisa: That's so helpful, Tiffany, because I don't care what our circumstances are, we are all in places of fear.

Tiffany: Yeah.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: So I'm...I'm reviewing you found Jesus to be your safe place, you leaned into His protection, you learned to reach out to the strength of others when you didn't have your own strength, um when you are afraid because the word is *when* not *if*...when you are afraid,...

Tiffany: Come on. Come on.

Elisa: ...you decide that you're going to live love into that fear, which is a very radically surprising approach, but I'm also hearing other steps that I wonder if you could express and one of them is use your voice when you see something wrong. I'm hearing you say that over and over. You know, and so for all of us who are in situations where maybe we have a benefit to lay aside as we speak up for someone else, we need to recognize that, but what other steps can we take, practical steps, to speak up for the injustice that might be occurring around us...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...when we watch it and see it.

Tiffany: Well forgive the alliteration in advance,...

Elisa: Okay.

Tiffany: ...but first we must lament...lament. We must grieve what we're seeing, even if we've benefit from it, even if it doesn't affect us at all. The fact is there are sisters who are grieving and they're grieving silently. We must publicly and privately, interior and exteriorly lament. And from that posture of humility,



we have to just listen. We need to consider our body language. We need to consider our facial expressions. We don't need to ask follow-up questions. When women tell truth, as we talk about, you know, with that first century, you know, refusal to believe in women and to believe a woman's story, you know, that's been baked into the bread for many of us and...and as we have been culturally conditioned to...to kind of walk in that and...and so I think to listen, to just simply listen and hear the stories without putting our spin on it, without asking, "Well, are you sure? Did this happen or were you blowing his out of proportion or is this what you think happened?" Nope, none of that. We just simply listen and allow compassionate responses, allow our empathy to take over, practicing that muscle of empathy that...that makes us all more like Jesus. And then we have to learn. We have to learn how these things happen. We have to learn that man, so many of our spaces are architected for women to lose out and so much of the advancement globally has been predicated on the subjugation of women, and as followers of Jesus, what does it look like to learn about it and have a posture of knowledge so I can do something about it. And then, finally, love looks like justice.

Eryn: Hmm.

Tiffany: I think so many of us have divorced love and justice, that those are the opposite sides of the coin, and in reality they reside on the same side. And this propensity to forgive without repentance.

Eryn: Mm hmm.

Elisa: Mm hmm.

Tiffany: To like, "Oh, you just need to forgive, you just need to move on," because sometimes in faith spaces, we put an expiry date on how long the woman can suffer. On how long the woman can feel heavy about something. In reality, she's entitled to her journey and it's our response to walk alongside her, not decide how long she can...can lament or...and...and live in...in sadness. You know, Job is a great example of this. His friends came near, but then they started to be like, "Hey Job, you kind of need to move this along, and what did..."

Elisa: Snap out of it, yeah.

Tiffany: ...do to deserve this? What did you do to deserve this?" So their first response was the right one, but then they quickly moved into this um kind of bossy position where they were like, well if I... "Well if it were me or here's what you should do. Or what did you do? What was your part?" And, of course, there's room for ownership, but this idea of blaming women for any sort of harm that comes to them is often an



act of self-preservation because if she did something to deserve her harm, then she surely this would never happen to us.

Elisa: Mmm.

Tiffany: It's easier to believe one woman is a problem than address a system and belief system where we would have to architect the whole thing to ensure equitable spaces that could easily affect us, so love and justice, I believe it was, you know, Dr. Cornel West who said, "Love is justice in public."

Eryn: Mmm.

Elisa: Hmm.

Tiffany: So maybe we...we go to our small group leader or our pastor or HR with our friend or we say, "Hey, I'm noticing something here." Well before anything kicks off. Well before we send something truly of...of a macro level on those little micro levels. "Hey, I sense something. Is everything okay?"

Elisa: Mmm.

Tiffany: "You know, I'm here for you."

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: "I'll go with you. You don't have to do this alone."

Eryn: Yeah.

Tiffany: In my situation I didn't...didn't finally take action. I...I sat on this secret that haunted me and just kept me silent for so many months, way too many months, until someone say, "You don't have to do this alone. I'll go with you."

Eryn: Mmm.

Elisa: Mmm.

Tiffany: And then everything changed.



Elisa: Wow.

Tiffany: Everything changed.

Eryn: Wow.

Elisa: Wow.

Tiffany: So we lament, we listen, we learn, we love.

Elisa: When you take yourself into Scripture and you're face-to-face with Jesus and you're a woman, and you experience His responding to you uniquely as a woman, what interaction hits you square in the heart? You know, where do you see yourself in His interaction with a given woman?

Tiffany: Oh, man, what a beautiful question. Man, you really, that's such a fun question. I think we can find ourselves in all of them, the shiny stories and the not so shiny stories, because as much as we want to be Mary Magdalene or Mary or...or Deborah, we're also Jael and we're also Tamar and Rahab. We are both at the same time. We are both their brokenness and their beauty, their boldness and their courage and their defeat. So I think ah one of them, if I had to think of one, I'm so drawn to the story of the Samaritan woman. It's the longest recorded conversation Jesus had with anyone and it made it into the Scriptures. You know, the fact that that is the one we have and we're able to see His respect and His dignity that He went out of His way for one. He did for one, what He wishes He could do for everyone. He honored her. He didn't shame or blame her for her lot in life, and she left with such a boldness that she didn't come to that well with. When she went back and told the townspeople, that she, you know, we can...from conjecture, we can kind of likely assume she was trying to avoid the come here of the man who told me everything I'd ever done of my life. There's just so much beauty and honor and vulnerability in that story and the way she had an about-face, that 180, um that resonates with me. That resonates with me of just finding Jesus and like, okay, well then nothing's ever going to be the same, because this is no longer dependent on how far I can get myself. My life is now dependent on who He is. Not myself.

Eryn: Mmm. Mmm.

[Music]

Eryn: Let's think on the steps that Tiffany mentioned one more time: lament, listen, learn, and love. What a beautiful way for us to empower and sit with our sisters. This is *God Hears Her*.



Elisa: And they were four “L” words, so it’s easy to remember too, Eryn. Lament, listen, learn, and love. Well before we close out today’s episode, just a quick reminder that the show notes are available in the podcast description. The show notes not only contain the talking points for today’s episode, but you’ll also find a link to connect with me and Eryn on social. So check out the show notes on our website, godhearsher.org.

Eryn: Thank you for joining us, and don’t forget God hears you, He sees you, He loves you, because you are His.

[Music]

Elisa: Today’s episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Daniel Ryan Day and Mary Jo Clark. And today we also want to recognize Melissa, Nicole, and Rochelle for their help in creating and promoting this episode of the *God Hears Her* podcast. Thanks, friends.

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