

God Hears Her Podcast Episode 71 - Christ as a Baby Elisa Morgan & Eryn Eddy

Elisa: You know, Jesus Himself humbled Himself into the likeness, the reality, the fullness of a child in a mother's womb. God scrunched, munched, you know, into a womb and then wriggling out and then screaming and being slapped for air and then nursing and then needing diapers and then needing the...the love and the care of being held in a blanket and kept warm and protected by His mom and dad from the craziness of Herod who wanted to murder all the male children. And then toddling and falling and...and running and falling and getting back up and growing.

Eryn: Yeah.

[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*.

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

Eryn: And I'm Eryn Eddy. Today, Elisa and I want to talk about the story of Jesus but not in the way we tend to talk about Him.

Elisa: No, today we're talking about baby Jesus, the infant in Mary's womb. We want to focus on Him being born back in that time. What was it like for Mary? And what does it say about this in Scripture?

Eryn: Let's dive right into this conversation on this episode of *God Hears Her*.

Elisa: Eryn, do you have a nativity scene that you bring out like year to year? Or maybe did your family?

Eryn: Oh, growing up, it was always we bring all the Christmas decorations out, all of the ornaments from when we were like little to like you know then these like fancy looking ones.



Elisa: Like the egg carton crate ones...

Eryn: Yes, yes.

Elisa: ...all the way to the...the...

Eryn: Ones that were like you know when we got them when...like our first ornament as a little baby.

Elisa: Okay, so back to the nativity.

Eryn: Sorry, yeah.

Elisa: What did your family nativity? Can you remember what they looked like? What was their style, color, size, all that stuff?

Eryn: Yes. They were wooden. And it was more of like a fancy looking nativity scene. We had like a more rustic one where it was like raw wood and stained clothes. But the newer one that we would have growing up was more polished, painted. It was a piece of art really is what it was.

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: And we would put it in front of the fireplace. We had a...a mantle.

Elisa: But it was accessible. I love that. Oh yeah, we have had all kinds. I didn't really have one growing up. But as an adult myself, I have had all kinds. I have had them like made of fabric like somebody made them in a MOPS Group. I've had...I had this super fancy one that a...a really wealthy friend gave me, and it was imported from Italy. It was all gold-filigreed.

Eryn: Oh wow.

Elisa: One of my favorite ones is actually the Fischer Price one that I had for my grandkids. And you can put the angel on top of it and push it, and it plays. I think it's "Silent Night." You know, that's so cute. But my very, my very favorite nativity is actually just a little kind of like a bird's nest like a little wreath that



you'd get at a hobby store. It's probably only like four inches in circumference. And then on top of it is a little bit of that Spanish moss. Then there's a little bitty baby Jesus like made out of a clothespin or something wrapped in a piece of felt. And it's got a little you know sharpie taken to do a little smile and some eyes on his face. And...and then he's got this little blob of hair and a halo made out of a pipe cleaner that's held up above his head by a stretched-out paperclip. Oh my gosh. I love that baby Jesus, and it's so tiny. You know I can hold it in my hand, so I can like put it by my computer when I'm writing. Or I can stick it on the kitchen sink window. Or I can you know e...even, you know, put it on my beside table at night. I just love it because I think it's...it's so homespun. It's so whimsical. And I think it's so humble.

Eryn: I was about to ask you why was that your favorite one out of all of the ones? Especially when you said you had one out of gold, and you had...why...why was this one the most special to you?

Elisa: I don't know. Maybe Eryn...maybe it feels approachable. Maybe it feels not too lofty for me. And...and I guess you know, I actually wanted to think about baby Jesus today. Cause when we come to the Christmas season, I mean we think about of course, Mary and Joseph and the angels and the splendor and the...the wise men, the magi journeying, and you know just these crazy things.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: But the most mind-boggling reality when you sit and think about it, might be God as baby Jesus...baby Jesus.

Eryn: That's really hard to wrap my mind around. It's really hard to wrap my mind around God being a baby.

Elisa: Yeah, I mean today we have like pregnancy apps, you know, that will show you the size of the...the fetus, little baby growing inside you. You know it's a grain of rice. And you know now it's a bean and you know and now it's a...a fig. And you know it keeps growing.

Eryn: Mango.

Elisa: Yeah, mango, watermelon. Now, we don't get that big. [inaudible]

Eryn: True, you feel like a watermelon.

Elisa: Yeah, you do. You know and...and I think we can be a little, I don't know, crass or even take it for granted. Because pregnancy is...has been so public. But in...in Jesus' day it was super mysterious. They didn't have those apps. They didn't have ultrasounds and you know they didn't have drugs, you know, [inaudible]. They didn't have any of that. And so, to imagine Jesus as a baby inside Mary's womb is maybe even more startling. Okay, now I want to do a full disclosure here. I've never been pregnant, okay. I've never been pregnant. So, in a lot of ways, I know nothing about what I'm talking about here today. So zero. Our kids came to us through adoption. And...and how bout you?

Eryn: I've never been pregnant either.

Elisa: Yeah. So what are we doing?

Eryn: So here we are. Welcome.

Elisa: But maybe that's...maybe that's a piece of naivete and newness we can bring to this conversation. Because when we come to Christmas, it is the time of year where we focus in on baby Jesus. You know when we think about Jesus Himself, you know, I usually think about Him resurrected, you know, sitting in a throne, you know, all-powerful. How do you normally imagine Jesus?

Eryn: Yeah, I don't imagine Him as a little, little baby that's spitting up and you know learning how to talk and walk. And I wonder if it's because I struggle with imagining that because I think that that would mean He's weak.

Elisa: Yeah, oh that's so good. And how could He be weak when He's God?

Eryn: Right. Why do we have a hard time imagining Him as a baby?

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: But do you think we view babies as being fragile? And so therefore they're weak and there's no way Jesus was ever weak. He's my hero, you know.

Elisa: That's so good.

Eryn: He's my protector. He's my guide, my guardian and...and so for me to imagine Him in a fragile state

is just kind of a weird concept in my mind.

Elisa: So good. And yet, babies are weak. They are fragile, you know. I mean they really are. I mean imagine you've seen a newborn, right? I mean I've been present at several births. I don't know if you

have. I've been present at both vaginal births and at C-sections just by grace, some with my daughter,

some with dear friends who said "I know you haven't been through this, so come in here with me." And

I'm like wow.

Eryn: Oh.

Elisa: And there is no doubt that babies are fragile. They are vulnerable. I mean they can't even get the

gunk out of their throats, you know, without somebody wacking them on the back or suctioning it out.

And...and then they're laid out on their mom's chest just kind of splayed you know, with their appendages

going every which way, you know. And then they...they [fetal] up into a little curled ball. And they snuggle

into their mom. And if the mom didn't help them eat, would they even know how to take their first sip and...and suck and...and take in nurture and sustenance. They're so helpless. Their little heads roll

around [sound effect].

Eryn: I was just about to say. I've got five nieces and two nephews. And when I would hold them when

they were little babies, I'm like I'm going to break this little...

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ...little precious gem. Cause the head is just rolling around, and it has no strength to hold itself up.

Elisa: It's encouraged me that they're a little less destructible than we imagine. Though I remember when

my husband first held our niece. And it was like the first baby he'd held as an adult. And she was down on

his lap. And he looked up at...at our sister-in-law and said, "Well how do I get her up to my...my neck?

Eryn: Yeah, right.

Elisa: And she goes, well just bend down toward her and then gently lift her up. And so he bends down toward her. He lifts back up and then smacks her up against his shoulder...didn't quite have the synchronization down here. But she was fine, you know. She didn't do the startled reflex or anything. Oh that's hysterical.

Eryn: But you know...you bring up a point too in...in sharing that because I mean I have so many friends that you know go in and check on their baby, make sure their baby is still breathing at night because of the fragility of a new life and...

Elisa: And it's all up to us, you know, to make sure and my goodness there are many who have lost a baby with unexplained reasons. Just...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...indecipherable. No one really knows what happened. The mystery of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) or something else that...that happens. And the responsibility that weighs down on you. But here's the thing. If we can ponder this and maybe all of us as we walk through Christmas but as we walk through really any season in our relationship with the God of the universe, He scrunched Himself into the womb of a woman in a tiny little embryo and implanted Himself in her uterine wall and began to grow. I want us to...to look at just a couple of Scriptures, because we just gloss over this. We just go "and the virgin shall give birth." You know, and...

Eryn: And then now He's a man.

Elisa: Yeah, then He's a man [oop, oop].

Eryn: He's a man.

Elisa: But you know what? Let's read a couple of passages. Could you look up the gospel of John, John chapter 1, verse 14? And read that for us, Eryn. And we're going to look at a couple of other ones. I'm going to start with Matthew 1:23. Okay, and this...just picture your Christmas story in your church with all the kids with their flashlights being the star, you know the...that the wise men follow. And they're in their big, long bathrobes. Okay picture it. "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and they will call him Immanuel which means God with us." So that word *conceive* means conceive.



Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: Okay, and she's a virgin. And we get really weirded out by that thinking how did God do that? You know how did that happen? And as I've looked this up and just struggled with it, it really means the Holy Spirit overshadowed her. He...He covered her in such a...a way that there is a miraculous conception, an immaculate meaning pure conception. Okay so it's a true conception.

Eryn: Yeah, okay.

Elisa: And...and then John 1:14. This is a different perspective of how this beginning of God in the flesh or God in a baby took place. What do you have?

Eryn: I have, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Elisa: Okay, what...what strikes you in those words there?

Eryn: "We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son."

Elisa: So there's glory...

Eryn: From the Father.

Elisa: From the Father...there's glory from the Father. And what's the very first part of that verse?

Eryn: "The Word became flesh and dwelt."

Elisa: Flesh, flesh.

Eryn: And flesh.

Elisa: Yeah. That's human. That's human. You know that's...I mean animals have flesh. But this is the word for [carpe?]. You know, this is the word for human flesh. "The Word which was in the beginning"

John talked about a little earlier in his gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God." He was with God in the beginning. Okay, now the word, that same Word, that essence, that logos okay, became flesh and dwelt...

Eryn: Became flesh...

Elisa: ...among us.

Eryn: ...and dwelt.

Elisa: And you can still see the glory. Okay, I'm just like discombobulated now. I'm like I don't get this.

Eryn: Well you know here I am, for those that are listening and can't see, I'm looking. I have my Bible on my left, and I have my dictionary on my right.

Elisa: Good, good, good, good, yeah. Yeah, so this baby actually takes home, takes root, takes up place inside the womb of a woman. What do we know about women from New Testament times and Old Testament times? What was their place in society?

Eryn: To have babies.

Elisa: To have babies. And if you didn't have a baby, you were like [sound effect] not so valuable. We think about the story of Hannah in the Old Testament or the struggle of Leah and Rebekah. Or you there's, you know, all kinds of stories throughout Scripture of infertile people or people who were late in life, even Elizabeth. So here's Mary. And suddenly, she's pregnant.

Eryn: Would you say that women then, if you could not conceive a child, that their value or their worth was obsolete?

Elisa: Yeah, reduced.

Eryn: Reduced.

Elisa: Yeah, I...they were diminished in their worth.



Eryn: Diminished.

Elisa: Exactly. Yeah, that was...

Eryn: Okay.

Elisa: ...where they...they made their contribution. Now Mary, in contrast, is a very young girl. She's probably 12 or 13 years old.

Eryn: Wow.

Elisa: Because marriages were formed kind of arranged marriages when young women, you know, would enter puberty kinds of [eras]. And Joseph and Mary were betrothed, which was a long process, usually around a year. But it included like the expectation of we're together forever, but it didn't include intercourse. It didn't include sex. They lived in their own parents' homes until the actual wedding. So here's Mary, still living at home. Joseph's still living at home, and she becomes pregnant. And we can read the rest of the story in the Gospels. And they explain what Joseph went through, what Mary went through.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: What we want to focus in on, Mary is suddenly pregnant. And thinking about God who absolutely from the beginning of time to the end of time, if there is such a thing, was aware that He would scrunch Himself into a baby in the form of a baby...literally become flesh in the womb of a woman. And that's how He would come forth onto planet earth in physical being.

[music]

Elisa: When we come back, we'll talk more about the vulnerability of Jesus and the plans God had for Him even before He was out of the womb. The conversation will continue after the break on this episode of *God Hears Her*.

[music]

Elisa: Christmas is coming. And we have a great way to help you celebrate it joyfully. The God Hears Her. A Joyful Christmas kit includes our 31-day devotional with special readings for both morning and evening so you can start and end your day focused on Jesus. There's a Joyful Christmas ornament to hang on your tree as well as a notepad and pen to write notes. You'll also get access to coloring sheets, a frameable print, prayer prompts, and the God With Us booklet that you can download. So go to godhearsher.org/joyfulchristmas to order your Christmas kit and get ready for a joy-filled Christmas. Now back to the show.

Eryn: And you know what I love how this...this particular translation says "The Word became flesh and dwelt" and when I, you know. I love to just...I love to unpack words a little bit more. You know that about me, Elisa. The word "dwell" says "to remain for a time."

Elisa: That's good. That's perfect, isn't it?

Eryn: Isn't it? Okay. So continue. Continue.

Elisa: Exactly what He did. Thank you for looking that up. That's really good, Eryn. That's so "for a time." And you think that this baby was a baby, baby, baby. And then as you said, you know, he would spit up. He would eat. He needed to learn to walk and talk. He needed to learn to toddle. You...just all of these things. You know for a second too, let's focus in on...this blew me away. Birth in New Testament times was very dangerous for both moms...

Eryn: Really?

Elisa: ...and children. Like 30 to 35 percent of newborns didn't survive their first month. And like 50 percent of children died before the age of 10. Then you add to that a ton of moms also died during childbirth.

Eryn: That...I would imagine for Mary...

Elisa: Yeah, right.



Eryn: ...the percentage that you just shared of women being able to have babies, healthy babies, is small.

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: The pressure and the emotional stress I would imagine she's under of carrying the Messiah, being pregnant, not being married, the gossip of the town. I'm just thinking through...

Elisa: So good.

Eryn: ...like where she is emotionally. And then knowing that it's hard to have a baby during that time. Like the percentages are high for the loss. And I wonder in her mind if she ever doubted, will I have this baby?

Elisa: Yeah, will He make it?

Eryn: And am I responsible for if the baby doesn't make it?

Elisa: And you just brought that up, you know, as we were talking about us, you know, and our friends and loved ones and how you wake up all night making sure the baby is there and okay. And yeah, and you know we...we tend to think, this is another one of our little let's gloss over this stuff, we think well Mary was somehow supernaturally-empowered to be super-human. Well yeah, she absolutely was inhabited by the Holy Spirit just as we are. But she was still human, you know.

Eryn: Right.

Elisa: And she was pretty scared. And it's interesting. She goes to see Elizabeth who's one of her relatives. And this is in Luke chapter 1. And I think this is interesting, because we also gloss over this. Can you read...let...let's do Luke 1:39 to 45. You take the first part, and I'll take the second part. And listen. Let's open our ears to what pregnancy was again like and...and somehow we may gloss over the reality of what it was like to carry a baby, okay.

Eryn: Yeah, okay. "In those days, Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby

leaped inside her. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and your child will be blessed."

Elisa: "But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promise to her." So Elizabeth is about six months pregnant, okay. Mary is brand new pregnant. Because, at that time right after the angel comes to her, she gets ready. And she hurries to go see Elizabeth, okay. So go back to our little baby app, you know, Jesus is like you know the size of the pea. But...but John, the one who's going to be John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ who was about six months old, is bigger than that. You know is...is probably I don't know, what does the...the baby app say? Quite...quite a bit older you know. And what we know is that in the womb, babies begin to kick their mothers. So this word "leapt" really does mean to make a movement and to...to jump and to...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...and to...to make his presence known. It blows me away that from time beyond in the beginning to now, babies have been in their mothers' wombs the same way every single time. And it's also interesting to see that the babies, you know, initially, they can't really see. Their eyes are shut until around the, I don't know, the seventh month or so. But they can hear.

Eryn: They can hear.

Elisa: And they can see light through their eyelids. Like if you and I closed our eyes right now, we can see light if we turn towards it. So in the womb, John, Jesus, can hear this exchange between their mothers. Isn't that fascinating?

Eryn: Oh, oh I just love that. Okay, so do you think Elizabeth knew Mary was pregnant because Mary wasn't showing?

Elisa: It sounds like it, doesn't it? It sounds like well it says that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. So it sounds like the Spirit revealed that to her.

Eryn: Yeah.



Elisa: And we're talking about the Messiah here. So it's not just like you know Jack or Jill, you know, in our womb. It is Jesus, you know and...and there is recognition given to their...both of their mothers. They've been...they've been the recipients of a miraculous revelation from God. Mary has an angel appear. Zechariah, who was Elizabeth's husband, has divine revelation too that they're going to become pregnant. You know, most women just find out through a little stick.

Eryn: Yeah, right.

Elisa: You know and a...and a plus sign that they're pregnant. But so there is some really special information given to them. But...but what does it do to sit with this reality again as we contemplate God coming to us, being with us? And let's go back to what you talked about, Eryn, cause I think you're right on target with it. The vulnerability, the vulnerability of God, and it's mind-boggling to us. Why are we so uncomfortable to imagine God being weak, being fragile as a child?

Eryn: Could it be that if we thought of Him in that way that that would remove His ability to protect us or guard us or maybe question if He is who He says He is? Those are the immediate thoughts that come to my mind.

Elisa: That's good. I think, you know, maybe what you're reflecting is we're so black and white that we only see God as a baby or as the resurrected Lord and Christ, you know. It's difficult to us...for us to understand He is all of the above, isn't it?

Eryn: Right, yes.

Elisa: I think about a passage in the book of Philippians which is one of the apostle Paul's letters to the New Testament church. And he...it's a heavy, heavy passage. But let me just read a little bit of it because he...he talks about how God laid aside some of His attributes. He says, "In your relationships with one another (this is in chapter 2, verse 5) have the same mindset as Christ Jesus who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage. But rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant and being made in human likeness." And He goes on to humble Himself on the cross. I guess what I really want to do is...is help us to mush together these attributes of our God and maybe not divide them out so stratified that we miss who our God is. When Jesus was in His public ministry in his thirties, Luke tells us, and this is in Luke 18, that people would listen to these words and listen for what we're talking about baby Jesus. People were

bringing babies to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them. And when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to Him. And He said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them. For the kingdom of God belongs to such as those. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Eryn: Like a little child.

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: Wait, read that last line again.

Elisa: Yeah, "Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Eryn: Oh man.

Elisa: We stratify God into God and human.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: But the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is an expression of the community of God of the nature of God, of the all-ness of God, not the one or another. And Jesus Himself, in His ministry, one of His hallmarks, one of His cornerstones is to welcome children. But the verse starts off, "People were bringing babies...babies."

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: And that means infants for Jesus to place His hands on them. And the disciples go oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. Don't bother Him with those. And Jesus is like no, no. Don't hinder them. Let them come. In fact, you need to embrace your own vulnerability the way I inhabited it as well in order to really come and be in relationship with Me.

Eryn: When it says "receive the kingdom like a child," that's what it's saying is to be vulnerable like a child.



Elisa: Yes.

Eryn: But vulnerability is taught so differently now I feel like than what even Scripture says. Cause I think even we...we have a tendency to just become so self-sufficient and become self-aware but not Christ-aware.

Elisa: Yeah, you know Jesus Himself humbled Himself into the...the likeness, the reality, the fullness of a child in a mother's womb, God scrunched, munched, you know, into a womb and then wriggling out and then screaming and being slapped for air and then nursing and then needing diapers and then needing the...the love and the care of being held in a blanket and kept warm and protected by His mom and dad from the craziness of Herod who wanted to murder all the male children and then toddling and falling and...and running and falling and getting back up and growing. This is our lives. And Jesus Himself lived in these lives and asks us to remember the neediness that we experienced as a baby, that He experienced as a baby in order to come into a relationship with Him. That's what baby Jesus means. So when we get out our little nativity scenes, you know, I...I just want to sit for a minute with that little guy you know and just let it all be there, all that vulnerability that He possessed, that He encourages me to own and acknowledge before Him and bring it forward to Him.

Eryn: Yeah, yeah, there's so much strength in who He is to be able to humble yourself and be in that vulnerable state and to show that to the world. And if He models that for me, it's just so humbling and convicting for me when I want to put up my walls of self-preservation and...and even have like these internal wars where I think that I need to operate in my, again, my own strength...not be vulnerable with Him even. And yet He was able to be nurtured, and He received being taught...

Elisa: Yes.

Eryn: ...as a baby, you know. And...

Elisa: He received it.

Eryn: ...and what a lesson that is for me when I want to not receive being taught, to not receive somebody wanting to nurture...

Elisa: That's good.



Eryn: ...the hardened parts in me, seeing vulnerability as a strength.

Elisa: This is a shattering thought, I think. His expression of vulnerability begins in the womb and at birth and as baby Jesus. And then we watch His public ministry when truly He is God and He could speak a word and blow fire over all of the naysayers. But He instead humbles Himself to death on a cross. I'm floored by...I.'m sure you've seen at some point in your life Michelangelo's Pietà which is Mary holding the dead, crucified body of Jesus in her arms. And...and if you think about that, what a full circle expression of this vulnerability. So she gives birth to this baby Jesus that she swaddles and holds in her arms and takes responsibility to nurture and grow, and she releases Him to ministry. And He humbles Himself in vulnerability to death on a cross as a common criminal. And He dies, and His body is taken down and cared for by the women, you know and figuratively we don't know for sure, but put back in the arms of His mother like that full circle—born, living, dying and eventually raised to give us life. So as we understand baby Jesus, I just hope we'll take in the true beauty of His vulnerability for us.

Eryn: The story of Jesus being born is absolutely incredible. I just love focusing on Him as an infant and what that actually looked like for the people back in the New Testament times.

Elisa: It is incredible. Jesus was a baby just like us. He lived a full life from being an infant in the womb to becoming the man that died for all of our sins. And then He rose again.

Eryn: Wow, yes, Elisa. It is such a unique topic to think about.

Elisa: Before we close out today's episode of *God Hears Her*, we want to remind you that the show notes are available in the podcast description. In today's show notes, we are also including a link for a *Discover the Word* series on "When God Was a Child." For more on this topic, the show notes not only contain the talking points for today's episode, but also links to connect with Eryn and me on social. You can visit our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

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

Elisa: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Mary Jo Clark, Daniel Ryan Day, and Jade Gustafson. Today, we also want to recognize Nicole and Melissa. Thank you.



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