



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 209 Lamb of God Christmas Special With Trillia Newbell

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Eddy Adkins with Trillia Newbell

[Music]

Trillia: Don't feel like you have to make something happen, like something has to be magical. We live in ordinary...our...most of our lives are just ordinary. And so I think just being okay with the ordinary. You know what? We had a meal around the table. That's...praise God, yay. That's it. And it doesn't have to be magical or sweet, um, but it can be focused on the Lord by what you're communicating.

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Eryn: Merry Christmas. We are so excited to talk with author and acquisitions director at Moody Publishers, Trillia Newbell. Trillia recently released the book, *Behold, the Lamb of God Has Come*, that explores special spiritual practices we can do to honor and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Let's get into this conversation.

Elisa: There's a kind of really powerful story in the first chapter of the gospel of John, Eryn. And I've always thought it was fascinating. It's when John the Baptist is with his disciples. And Jesus goes walking by, and John goes, "Look, the Lamb of God." I think that must have sounded really weird to them. Like, I mean, they knew that you sacrificed lambs, and that was a part of the whole Jewish ritual of sacrifice and cleansing and coming to God. Well, they just heard him say it, and they started following Jesus. So anyway, I'm bringing it up because in this Christmas season, sometimes we think about the titles of our Jesus who comes. One of them is the Lamb of God. We're going to have a conversation right now with a woman who has written a book called *Behold, the Lamb of God Has Come*, and it's a Christmas book. And I want to unpack, why did she pick that, you know, that particular name? So welcome, Trillia. We're so glad that you're here.

Eryn: Yeah, welcome.

Trillia: Thank you. I'm so glad to be here.



Eryn: So tell us a little bit about your story. I would love to know where do you live right now, and what were you like as a little girl? Where'd your faith come from?

Trillia: I live right outside of Nashville, Tennessee. It's a little town called Franklin. Um, yes, and I love it. I love living here, loved raising my babies here who are not babies anymore. And I did not grow up in the faith. I grew up in a very loving home. And we would go...I would call ourselves holiday Christians. We would go to church on the holidays. So especially Easter, you dress up, and you go to church. I gave my life to the Lord at the age of 22. So a girl shared the gospel with me when I was 19. It took a little while for it to sink in and for the Lord to just call me to Himself and transform my heart. And I will never forget I was singing the song "Rock of Ages." And there is a verse in there that says, "Wash me, Savior, or I'll die." And I knew I needed Jesus. I knew I needed Him. And so my life is...was transformed. And in every way, it's actually remarkable what the Lord did. And, um, and here I am many, many years later and following Him and...and serving Him in the best I can.

Elisa: That's beautiful.

Trillia: So, yes, it's...it is a testimony of God's mercy and kindness and grace.

Eryn: What was Christmas like for you as a little girl?

Trillia: Christmas was all about the gifts, right? So...

Eryn: Okay.

Trillia: ...we were just...I...I loved the...the tradition, the Christmas tree. We celebrated the tradition. All the, um...

Eryn: I see.

Trillia: ...cultural things. And...and I would say that we probably even talked about Jesus. My mom, I remember her. She...she has faith, and I remember her kneeling every night praying. So Jesus wasn't completely out of our home, but we were not...it wasn't permeating it.

Elisa: Yeah.



Trillia: So He wasn't. But we would wake up at, okay. All of my sisters...so I have three sisters. One passed away, so two now, but three. And we would all sleep in the same bed the night before. We'd all get up at like 5:00 AM.

Eryn: Oh.

Trillia: And this...we did this for years. And um, finally, I think we were just too old. I don't remember. I don't remember. At some point we said...

Elisa: Oh, come on. You stopped last year. You don't fool me.

Trillia: Yeah [laughter] that would be hilarious. And so my husband would be really perplexed. But um, but yeah, so we...so we did this forever. And...and so it was just kind of this fun um, kid-like thing to.

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: And we would...we would...just couldn't wait to see what gifts came on Christmas morning. So it was just that traditional thing that...that you do in the culture celebrating. But it was fun. It was fun.

Elisa: Yeah, yeah.

Trillia: . But it wasn't focused on the Lord. [laughter]

Elisa: Of course. So, you know, when you came to know God, how did it shift for you? How did you approach the holiday of Christmas?

Trillia: Truth be told, the only thing that changed is likely the reason for all of the celebrating. So we didn't take away the Christmas tree. We didn't stop giving gifts. We still did all that. We didn't tell our kids about Santa. Now...now everyone has different views. We told them but didn't, you know, we...it was loose. I'll say it that way. The difference is, is that we went to church and that we talked about the Jesus and Jesus was the reason for our celebrating. He is the gift of life. And we...so we were able to celebrate and enjoy these gifts, because He's the giver of all good gifts. It just shifts things when you focus on the Lord. So interestingly, it didn't change all of the kind of cultural...the ways that we celebrate.

Elisa: Sure, sure.



Trillia: It just changed the reason behind it.

Elisa: I like that. The reason behind it. And you know, back to the *Behold, the Lamb of God Has Come*, you know, how did you settle in on that particular name...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...of Jesus? And how does that shape your perspective on Christmas, and ours as well?

Trillia: Yeah. Well, there're so many...so many reasons. I wrote a devotional about the Lamb and...and how Jesus is the Lamb of God and...and how odd it actually really is. You...you started this podcast very well. It is odd to think about this innocent little la...like being sacrificed, a baby

Elisa: Yeah.

Trillia: A baby being sacrificed and that people actually had to do it and then that Jesus did it.

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: And He is the Lamb of God that He, um, willingly went to the cross, bearing the wrath that we deserved, died a death He didn't deserve, rose victoriously, which we cannot stop...we don't want to stop and not say that. But...but just to know that He is the ultimate sacrifice and that it's finished.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: So to give context, you know, for somebody who's actually unfamiliar with this concept of sacrifice in animals, and it sounds so barbaric.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Can you unpack for us the Old Testament requirement of the law to have a sacrifice in the Jewish faith and what that means, even for us as...as Christians?

Trillia: In the Old Testament laws, priests had to sacrifice lambs for the forgiveness of sin and cleansing, and...and Jesus is the great High Priest. He is the ultimate Lamb. So there's no longer that need for that...the sacrifice of sins year after year. He is it. And...and so, um, where priests had to do that, He



takes that place. He is the one who stands in between us and God as the sacrifice. So...so it's...we don't need the to...to go year after year and...and cleanse ourselves through the sacrifice of a lamb, which is...

Elisa: Very...that's helpful.

Trillia: ...so amazing. Which is...it's so amazing. I would encourage listeners to read the book of Hebrews. Because we really get a beautiful picture of all that Jesus did—that fulfillment of those...that Old Testament law that we are talking about, where priests had to sacrifice. You'll see language like He's the better...better Adam or greater Adam or...and you'll see that Jesus is the great High Priest, which I've used that language already. That is really if you...to understand the gospel, you've got to understand those that.

Elisa: And yeah, and...and because He sacrificed Himself, you know, God gave His Son to sacrifice as a Lamb, the Lamb of God on a cross. And we believe that then that He died for us. You know, we don't need to, like you're saying, worry about a sacrifice ever again. In other words, it's not what we do, doing it right. It's Who has saved us, you know?

Trillia: Right.

Elisa: And that's what it means to be saved by grace. You know, it's nothing that that we can do.

Trillia: Yes.

Elisa: You know what helps me understand this, especially at Christmas time, is the nursery rhyme, at least the first phrase of it. "Mary had a little lamb."

Trillia: Yes.

Eryn: Mm.

Trillia: "Whose fleece was white as snow."

Elisa: And I think about Mary was white. Yeah, the...the...the mother of Jesus, you know, having the Lamb of God. And so yeah, help us, take us forward, Trillia...

Eryn: Yeah.



Elisa: ...in...into how this truth of who Jesus is as a background for our celebrations. When we understand that the Lamb of God, behold the Lamb of God has come; that's the reason for it. Tell us how that shapes maybe your...your Advent season and how you approach Christmas, but also your celebration.

Trillia: Absolutely. So how does knowing that Jesus is the Lamb of God affect my holiday? When you fix your eyes on Jesus, the Author, Perfector of our faith, it's going to change everything about us and everything about how we approach it. But then we understand that we get this celebration. We get this time where we get to think about, speak about, sing about Jesus. It is a concentrated time, where not only for the Christian, I mean everybody is. It's...it's a cultural thing. What a great opportunity to share the gospel also...

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: ...to...for evangelism, you know?

Elisa: Yeah.

Trillia: Because it's such an open time for receiving Jesus. And so many people go to church during this time. But anyways, okay. But celebrating it...it's because, uh, He is the reason, and that sounds so cliché. But He really is the reason for our living, for our celebrating, for our breathing.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Trillia: So what it looks like for us, I mean it looks like conversations about Jesus at the dinner table. It looks like reading, concentrating on His birth, but not just His birth. I like to look at prophecies of Jesus. I looked...like to look at hymns about Jesus. And so it's...it's about in our everyday lives and getting to focus it on the birth and the beginnings, um, life of...of our...of our Savior.

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: And so that's one of the things that is remarkable to me, is that Jesus came, condescended, like put on flesh. [laughter]

Elisa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.



Trillia: And was born.

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: I just...like a baby and that we get to celebrate our King, um, as a baby, I think is really sweet.

Eryn: I would just love to hear from you to somebody that's listening that's like, maybe they are in the like, everyday routine of life, Christmases. You know, you...you acknowledge it. You get your Nativity scene. And you do like a moment, and then you move on, and you buy the gifts, and you wrap the presents, and you have fights about where the ornaments should go on the tree. And...and then you forget again really what the meaning is of Christmas. And so then you get pulled back into like maybe being taken away from the meaning because of the pressures and what you should do in your family and traditions. What are some things you can do to be motivated, to stay focused?

Trillia: Yeah.

Eryn: And have the joy that you...that you are showing? Because I think it's so easy to lose the motivation. I think if there's a motivation there that you...you can choose to...to have the joy, and you can choose to be fixed on it.

Trillia: Yeah.

Eryn: But what are some things that you could maybe unpack for somebody that identifies with, like lack of motivation and joy that...that sustains?

Trillia: Yeah, yes, okay. Well, there's a few things there. One, I just want to encourage people that there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So if you are feeling like, oh man, I dropped the ball. I didn't have joy, there is grace for repentance. So if we can confess our sin, He's faithful and just to forgive us and to purify us. But also, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So you don't stand guilty or condemned. You can ask the Lord for help and for grace and for strength and receive His forgiveness and receive His grace. So, because we've all been there, done that. So that's number one. The second thing is, is that the joy of the Lord is my strength. So I just want to know...you to know that I believe that joy and faith and all of those things are a gift. So ask God for it. Ask God to give you who is willing to give you all things—all things. And He's provided all things for you in Christ Jesus. So He's not hiding anything from you. He's not keeping anything from you. You ask Him and...and...and...



Eryn: He's not keeping all of that.

Trillia: ...wait. Yeah, I just believe that. Um, now that doesn't mean for some, you take a verse like "Joy comes in the morning," and you think, okay, well, uh, it's morning.

Eryn: Yep.

Trillia: That sometimes yeah, yeah, yeah.

Elisa: Where is it? Yeah.

Trillia: Yeah, where is it? Well, I...I do think that God's time is His time, and so we continue to ask and rest in Him and ask Him for help. So that's for the joy part of it, but for the...the...the...the intentional kind of some practical...

Eryn: Motivation, yeah.

Trillia: ...motivation, it doesn't start December 1st.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

Trillia: So I would encourage you, like it's good that you're starting now. But maybe next year, you can think, okay, maybe I need Him every day every year. We wait for something to happen. But we need, I...we need Him every minute, every day. Um...

Elisa: Yeah.

Trillia: We should be meditating on His law day and night. And so, if that's not for just a season, praise God for this season that we have this season as a reminder that we need Him and that we can sing about Him. And...and I love this season for those reasons. However, once February comes, I'm going to say January 1st, we're...we're, we might be motivated because of New Year's res. But once February, March, we still need Jesus.

Elisa: Yeah, yeah.



Trillia: And so...so my actual encouragement to anyone who feels kind of a lack of motivation is to think, well, you know, right now, I don't have to have some feeling to enjoy the Lord. I just, I need Him. I need to acknowledge that I need Him, and I can start in John. I can read about the birth, maybe just read the first few chapters of every gospel.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Trillia: To learn about the birth and baby steps.

Elisa: That's good.

Eryn: I love that you said, even if you don't have the feeling.

Trillia: Yes.

Elisa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Trillia: I think that's so important because if...if you're gonna wait to feel something, you're never gonna start. And that's...

Elisa: That's so good.

Trillia: ...just about with everything. Right?

Eryn: That's a whole other podcast we could talk about.

Trillia: A hundred percent. And so...so don't wait for some kind of feeling. Just know that you need Him. And you never know when the Lord's gonna bring up the Scriptures or whatever it is that you were reading. And because it will be in your heart. It will be a part of you. But don't feel like you have to make something happen, like something has to be magical or...we live in ordinary...our...most of our lives are just ordinary. And so I think just being okay with the ordinary. You know what? We had a meal around the table. That's...praise God. Yay. That's it. And it doesn't have to be magical or sweet, um, but it can be focused on the Lord by what you're communicating through prayer, through what you're reading. But I would just encourage you, it's not gonna...it really should start before...

Elisa: Year round. Yeah.



Trillia: Yeah.

Elisa: Christmas is not just a day. That's what I'm hearing you say. It's really an attitude, and it's a reality that infuses us. You know, Trillia, I've heard you talk about four things that we can focus on in the Advent season, and I wonder if you would just go over them. It's hymns and then Psalms.

Trillia: Yeah.

Elisa: And then the character of Jesus, and then recipes. And...and those four things I think are maybe pastimes or activities that we can do or mind...

Trillia: Yeah.

Elisa: ...uh, focuses that we can do to approach Christmas and do this more year round. Would you go into each one of those for us?

Trillia: Absolutely. I kind of love that you applied this to year round, because absolutely, we can do this year round. So what you're talking about is in my book, *Behold, the Lamb of God Has Come*. And so hymns, I love hymns. I was saved singing a hymn.

Eryn: Okay.

Trillia: "Rock of Ages," right? So it's just like hymns are just so rich with truth. And so if you read one of the historical hymns and go through them, you are likely to be inundated with theology.

Eryn: Which one would you encourage?

Trillia: For Christmas, um, you could start with "Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel."

Elisa: Yeah.

Trillia: Um, yeah, yeah. "Come All Ye Faithful, Joy to the World."

Elisa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.



Trillia: Think about that. And we've been talking about joy, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come." But we should be all rejoicing and singing. So hymns, I think, ground us in truth. It helps us to sing and to reflect on theology. Of course, these are hymns written by people, and so they're not Scripture. But they are so rich. I think going through a hymn and singing it is such a delight and a real joy. The Psalms are really rich, because so many of them point to Jesus. But also they're...they...they're so open and raw, and it's just a, you can pray the Psalms. I don't know if people think of Psalms and Christmas.

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: But I...I just believe that they are a place to reflect on Jesus and who He is.

Eryn: Okay, so with that, I have a question. I mean, you...you don't think about Psalms when you think about Christmas.

Trillia: Right.

Eryn: A lot of when you read Psalms is crying out, it's...it's sadness. Do you see that there can be lamenting in the Christmas season?

Elisa: That's good, Eryn, yeah.

Trillia: I think there's a lot of lamenting in the Christmas season, and yes, you can lament. And the reason is I think that often it's...highlights people who are missing. Um, I think it highlights relationships that are broken.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Trillia: Um, broken families, it...it just shines a bright light. The holidays can be very difficult.

Elisa: Yeah.

Trillia: It makes me think of Paul when he says, "I'm sorrowful, yet always rejoicing"

Elisa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.



Trillia: So there is sorrow and lamenting and pain that you are like...likely right now someone's listening and thinking, I'm in a season of hardship and pain. And the good news about the Lamb of God is that He knows. He understands.

Elisa: Yes. Yes.

Trillia: And so we approach a throne of grace. Uh, we approach a God who understands, who draws near to the brokenhearted, who loves, who will not break a bruised reed, who's going to bear with us and who loves us so deeply. And that's good news...

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: ...for brokenhearted people. There is not only room for lamenting, it's probably in many ways appropriate...

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Trillia: ...to...to lament in...in...during the holidays.

Elisa: So the third thing you suggested was to really focus on the character and the nature of Jesus, which is kind of where we've been focusing. That's behind all of this. That's the reason. Let's remember who He is. Let's remember what He sacrificed. Let's remember our need for Him. And then...then you talk about recipes and how that can be another tool. Talk to us about that.

Trillia: Well, food brings us together. And so even...we all...most of us eat. We all have to eat. And there's something about the holidays, you...you...it's just...it brings us together. And so anytime I can think of food or helping us gather together because of food, I do. Because it...it does. It's a...it's a every celebration. What do you celebrate with?

Eryn: Mm.

Trillia: Food. It doesn't matter in...where it is, whether it's a graduation or if it's a holiday, like Christmas. And so, um, I am not reflecting on food in the Scriptures. So I'm not looking at food in that realm. I'm mostly just adding a fun element. Because that is it. It's just a fun addition to what we're already doing. Well, let's gather around together and do it with food.



Elisa: That's good.

Eryn: Oh, love that.

Elisa: You know what I'm struck by is, we started looking at John 1, where John the disciple describes John the Baptist pointing his disciples to Jesus. And you know, he goes, "Look, behold the Lamb of God." And what I love that happens is that as they look at Him, and this is down in uh, verse 38, Jesus turns around and goes, "What do you want?" And that's such a great posture, I think, too, to come to God with during the Christmas season as you're talking about the lament that's inevitable in our lives and going through all of those, talking about looking at the...the hymns, looking at the Psalms, looking at Jesus' attributes and celebrating with food. But beholding the Lamb of God means realizing He's the Lamb. He's the one who came as the true gift of Christmas. And so in our brokenness, Jesus turns and asks us, "What do you want?"

Eryn: Hmm.

Elisa: And what a great question to consider in the Christmas season too. How is Jesus asking each of us, what do you want? What do you want from Me this year? What do you want from Me today? What do you want from Me as you celebrate and...and to truly take that posture of beholding. He is the Lamb of God who can provide for all of our needs in a relationship with Him. Wow. Speak to us a little bit about that Trillia, if you will. What does it mean for the very Lamb of God to ask us what we want?

Trillia: Yeah. Well, in...in the context of John 1, they're looking for a teacher, a rabbi, right? And so...

Elisa: Yeah, yeah.

Trillia: ...He's saying, come and see.

Elisa: Yes.

Trillia: I...I am, I am He.

Elisa: Yes.

Trillia: And...and so for us, I think that Jesus, He provides for all of our needs. It doesn't mean that, however, that He's gonna give us everything we want. But He will give us everything we need.



Elisa: That's good.

Trillia: And so when we come to Him, I...I think He's...He's...He asks us and He tells us to ask for anything in His name. But we have to remember that He knows what is best for us.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

Trillia: And so...so the invitation is a sweet one to me. What do you want? That He invites us to, um, ask Him and to...to...to pray to Him and to...but what I think is most remarkable about all of this, is that we can have a relationship with Him and that we can have a personal relationship with the living God.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Trillia: I think that's remarkable. I hope it encourages people is that God is inviting you to speak to Him and have a relationship with Him and that we can remain, abide in Him. We can run to Him and go to Him. And we're talking about...talking about the character of God. We're talking about the holy, just, set apart God invites us...

Eryn: Yeah.

Trillia: ...to come to Him and speak to Him. I think that, to me, is amazing.

Eryn: And so maybe this Christmas we can see that this is an invitation this year for those that may have not wanted to accept the invitation to understand how to have a relationship with the Lord daily to lead to the next Christmas.

Trillia: Yeah.

Eryn: As we come to a close, I would love it if you would pray for the woman that may be struggling to trust, struggling to celebrate Jesus, or struggling to receive an invitation to be with Him. Would you pray over that woman that may be hurting in any of those spaces?

Trillia: Absolutely, absolutely. *Lord, I thank you that You are holy. You are just, and You are also our Father. And You invite us to a throne of grace in Your time, in our time of need. Lord, we need You every hour, every day. And Lord, right now, I just want to pray for the woman who is struggling to draw near to You. God, would You draw near to her? Would You reveal Yourself mightily to her? Would You help her*



to know that You hear her prayer, You hear her cries, You know her intimately, and You love her deeply. That I pray that You would minister to her even now. God and I pray that for that woman that You would give her boldness to speak honestly about her needs that she can ask You what she really needs. And thank You, Lord, that You invite us, You invite us to, um, to ask. God thank You that You do not withhold, that every good and perfect gift comes from You. So, Lord, I pray right now for the women who are struggling, who are having a hard time approaching You, God, that...that You would give them the strength and grace to approach You. God, I pray for the brokenhearted. God, I pray You would comfort, that You would draw near, that You would give them people in their lives who could comfort them. Thank You, Lord, that we get to comfort with the comfort that we've received from You. Oh God, I pray You would do that. Lord. And Jesus, thank you. Thank You right now that You are interceding for us, that You live to make intercession for Your own. Lord, thank You. Thank You, Jesus, that You are the Lamb of God, that You died on a cross for our sins, that You are now seated with the Father on high. God, thank you. Lord, thank You. Lord, thank You for the gift of singing, the gift of the Psalms, Your Word. Thank You for the gift of who You are, God, and thank You that we can reflect on these things so freely. What a gift it is. I pray that for each and every person listening, God, that we would have a season, um, filled with joy and our eyes fixed on You. Jesus, we love You and it's in Your name we pray. Amen.

[music]

Elisa: Amen. Merry Christmas, friends. We pray that this season you would feel the Lord's presence and maybe do one of the practices that Trillia shared.

Eryn: Yes. Well, before we go, check out our website to subscribe to our email list so you never miss a *God Hears Her* update. Find that and more at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org. Thank you for joining us, and don't forget. God hears you. He sees you, and He loves you because you are His.

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Elisa: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Jade Gustman and Mary Jo Clark. We also want to thank Jim, John, and Kevin for all their help and support. Thanks everyone.

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