



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 211 – Called to Worship with Kelly Minter

Elisa Morgan & Vivian Mabuni with Kelly Minter

[Music]

Kelly: But I think we see this birth of a vision and then death of a vision all throughout Scripture where God gives a vision and then we're like, yes, because He gives it to us, but then we kind of create it, like, sort of, kind of, how we think it's going to go, and then it... and then it doesn't happen the way we thought. And then there's a... a resurrection of a vision or a rearranging of circumstances. And so, I would just encourage people who are, like, if you're really truly following the Lord, and things... life isn't quite working out the way you hoped, that you would be encouraged that the Lord is in it.

[Music]

Vivian: You are listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women, where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you. Join our community of encouraging one another and learning to lean on God through Scripture, story, and conversation at godhearsher.org, God hears her. Seek and she will find.

Elisa: Hey friends, before we get started, make sure to download or print our new Bible study show notes to fill out while you listen. You can find those on our website.

Vivian: Our guest this week is the amazing Kelly Minter. She has become such a dear friend to me. We both went through graduation together, got our master's degrees from Denver Seminary in Biblical Theological Studies...

Elisa: [high pitched "what" sounds] Hey!

Vivian: ... we crossed that bridge. But Kelly is an author and a speaker, a Bible teacher, she's passionate about not only God's Word, but she's passionate about helping people be equipped to study God's Word. As I've gotten to know Kelly, I've just seen how she lives a surrendered life, and she has been seeking God through the twists and turns, and I just love that about her posture. She's very involved in Justice and Ministry International, which is a ministry that serves in the Amazon and she brings women with her to experience that. We'll get to talk about that today, and I'm just excited for our conversation with Kelly. So welcome, Kelly Minter, to the *God Hears Her* podcast.



Kelly: So excited to be here with you all.

Elisa: Why don't you take us back, Kelly, to... to you as a kid growing up, where were you and what was that childhood like?

Kelly: Yeah, so, I grew up in the Washington DC area in northern Virginia, and so, right outside DC but in Virginia, and my parents had started a church right before I was born. So, I grew up in the church and there was always a huge emphasis that we had on international missions in particular... missions everywhere, but a lot of international missions. So, I think that really began my... my love for the mission field and what God was doing in other parts of the world, and... eventually made my way to Nashville, Tennessee, where I have been for almost twenty-five years, which is crazy. And... and so, yeah, so, I've been here, and I came here... originally because I had signed a record deal, which I was so excited cause it was a... I signed with Word Records, I was doing... in the Christian music industry and I... I always say that I was really thrilled because I just knew that I was going to be rich and famous for the glory of God, right? So, and the Lord had some things to teach me...

Elisa: Oh gosh.

Kelly: So, anyway, I got here, loved music, love... loved doing what I was doing, but certainly I had put a lot of stock in my ability to be successful, to achieve, to be known, to be respected in the industry, all of those kinds of things. And the Lord began to dismantle all of that piece by piece. But interestingly enough, I had signed three record deals and my... my third record deal, I signed with a record company that had a lot of ties in the US but was based out of England. And so, I was so excited because they... they published a lot of worship songs like... I mean, songs we've been singing for years, like "In Christ Alone," and "Here I Am to Worship," and "Blessed Be Your Name" and "10,000 Reasons," and...

Elisa: Wow, yeah.

Kelly: ... you know, so all these amazing... worship artists and worship leaders, and I was sure that that third time was a charm. And I felt like that was a Bible verse. You know, it feels like a Bible verse, it sounds like it's a proverb, and it's not. And I'm sorry to shatter anybody out there who thinks that that is a proverb, because it feels like it should be, but it is... it is not. And so, the president of the record company was... a man by the name of John Pack, and he was very influential in the worship and in publishing songs globally, but he also had a ministry in the Amazon jungle of Brazil, which...

Elisa: Random.



Kelly: ... I did not really know...

Elisa: Okay, right.

Kelly: ... about, right, when I was getting into everything...

Elisa: Yeah.

Kelly: ... and so, he had asked me to be part of a worship... a live recording at Abbey Road Studios in London where The Beatles recorded...

Elisa: Wow, yes.

Vivian: Wow.

Kelly: ... and you know, those are those phone calls where you're like, *this is absolutely the will of the Lord*, like, *a hundred percent I... I'm going to do this*. And so, I went over there for a good while... maybe a little over a week, and we were recorded, and we rehearsed, and it was an amazing night, and after I sang the song that I was leading that night as part of... at the event, I went up into the balcony, and at the end of the night, John got up and thanked everybody for being there, and being part of this live recording, and then said, *oh, and by the way, I also have this ministry that I work with in the Amazon Jungle. I'd love to show a little video. I'd love for you all to consider supporting the ministry*. So, I'm watching this video at Abbey Road Studios in London, and I am watching these people, like, on a hammock boat, go down the river, I'm just like, *bless the Lord that those people have been called to the Amazon and that I am in London*, you know, *at Abbey Road Studios*...

Elisa: I love it.

Kelly: ... And, I mean, it was not fifteen minutes later that John came up and asked me if I wanted to go to the Amazon with him, and so, it sounded like an adventure. I took my dad, I took my siblings, we went to the Amazon and it completely captivated me for the rest of my life. I've never been to another place like it. I can't even tell you how many times I've been there now since that was the first time, in 2009. All that to say is I got... the... the record... the *Third Time's a Charm* record was... did... not a charm, and really didn't do a whole lot... got to write some... with some wonderful people, was very thankful for the opportunity, but I kept going back to the Amazon with John, and here John, like I said, was publishing all



these amazing songs and working all over the world, but after many times of being in the Amazon with him, all of a sudden I realized that the Lord had tricked me to the Amazon through a record deal...

Elisa: Of course.

Kelly: ... and... and I was sitting on the boat one night with... with John, and John was a man of few words, and the sun had set, and we're sitting on the boat, and we're out in the middle of nowhere, and all of a sudden, I realize, *oh. Oh, oh, oh, oh. Okay. Wait. The Lord has not wasted any of this whole journey with music, with record deal...* with... thing, like I was now part of a whole ministry, and a whole work that God is doing there. And I just thought that when I was following John, and following the music path, that it was headed in a certain direction. I didn't realize that... the Lord was actually taking me someplace I didn't know that I wanted to go, and I... it... it has been absolutely life changing. John ended up passing away from cancer... a few short years after these very influential, impacting, life-changing times that I shared with him in the Amazon, but I happened to be with him the night before he passed away in England. And I'll never forget it, he said... he said, *you know, I had a lot of retirement plans. I was going to buy... a home in Spain. My wife and I were going to knock golf balls around. And he said, and then the Lord introduced me to the Amazon, and he said, and He wrecked my retirement plans. And he said, and I'm so glad that He did, and one of the things that he would say often is, I finally began to understand what really worship is. He said, I thought I knew what worship was because I published worship songs, and he said, I didn't really know what worship was until I began to give my life away for the poor, for the sake of Jesus. And so... so, all that to say is Justice and Mercy International is a huge part of... of my life, and very grateful to be part of it.*

Elisa: I love this theme that God called you into worship way back before you understood what that really would mean, and...

Kelly: Sure.

Elisa: ... you know, we usually can't tell these things until we're looking back, you know, but God often rearranges, but there are themes. I think that's really why it's important to journal, and to keep track of what we pray, and to have relationships with other people who can remind us, because we might miss, you know, the breadcrumbs that actually are leading...

Kelly: Sure.



Elisa: ... someplace. I love how you're defining your ministry in the Amazon, and your daily as well, as worship.

Kelly: Yeah. And I think that whole... you said serve and worship, and you know that word in the Old Testament when God calls His people to... and he says to Moses is, "Tell Pharaoh, let my people go so that they may worship Me." But then a lot of our Bibles will say serve, and the Hebrew word is *abod*, and it really means to... to work for the Lord, to serve the Lord. It is... it's like a whole life, it... it kind of... I think corresponds with... in Romans 12 where it says that, "this is our honorable act of worship," that we would...

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... lay ourselves down before the Lord. And so, worship I... I think in many respects, it's really just everything that we do throughout the day, whether sacred or secular, if we're going to even make those distinctions, for the glory of the Lord and in service of Him. And so, it really took me going to the Amazon to really understand what service even really looked like here in my own community, and to open my own heart up. The Lord opened my heart up to it here, but I had to go there to really understand it.

Vivian: Alright, so your life definitely took a turn. I hear in your heart this desire, growing up, pastor's daughter, surrounded by people who love God, and familiarity with the Bible stories, obviously, and all of that, and here you were headed to this career...

Kelly: Right, yes!

Vivian: ... and... and there was a big change cause third time was not a charm... and so, how did God move in your life to bring you to the place of really having such a deep love for the Scriptures, and a passion for others to also be able to be equipped to study the Word for themselves.

Kelly: That's a great question. I think, you know, He was moving in that even way before even hitting the Amazon. But when I was growing up, I... I would often jump in the car with my dad to go to Bible study, or head over to the church to set up for the missions banquet. I'm very grateful for my upbringing, and I was the oldest too, so it was kind of novel and exciting. So, I kind of had this hunger for the Word early, but I also... I dealt with quite a bit of... of... of anxiety and depression, and really, honestly, looking back, I... I don't know that I could... I don't know that I would feel comfortable saying I know for sure, but it... it almost felt like oppression, you know, like, even dark oppression. Like, I really felt attacked by the enemy, and struggled with peace of mind, and... and just settledness of wellbeing. And so, I went to the



Scriptures early on looking for that... that balm, that healing, and not always interpreting them correctly, but the Lord's still meeting me in... in my sincerity to find...

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... truth, and healing, and wholeness from Him. And so, I... that's partly what gave me a real love for Scriptures is that He began to heal my mind through the Word. And I found a counternarrative to the narrative that we live, right? That you have to be successful; or you have to have money; or you have to have comfort; or you have to be popular; or you have to get back at people, if they hurt you, you got to get back. You can't forgive because you'd be losing control. So, that's kind of the narrative, right, that we're getting in the world, and I... I saw this real counternarrative in Scripture that seemed to cut against that... that storyline. And I believed it. It resonated as truth to me.

Elisa: So, there's this word echoing in my head and my heart right now, as... as you're sharing Kelly, and... and it's the word rearrange... and I don't know why, but, you know, I'm just listening to your story and hearing what you thought God was going to do, and shazam, what He did do. And yet there is this theme, this thread, of worship, of serving, of connecting to people to understand the narrative of the Scripture and how God rearranges all of us. Maybe can you talk for a few minutes about, does that word resonate with you?

Kelly: Oh, Elisa, this is my whole wheelhouse. Like, I am the disappointed Christian, but in a good way. In a... in a way, like, *oh, okay, Lord, this is what you're doing*. So, yeah, no, I love... I love this question... Yes, rearrange, I think, first of all, it does resonate because the Lord... to me, when I think of rearrange, nothing gets thrown out, right? It just gets moved. And I think that we see throughout Scripture there are these moments of disappointment. There are these moments where things don't work out. In fact, maybe be teaching out of the Exodus. Well, what happens with Moses is he gets called to... to lead the people and then Moses and Aaron go and they're like, *hey everybody, the Lord's heard your cry. It's going to be awesome*. Like, *He's going to deliver. It's going to be amazing*. And then what happens? Pharaoh gets mad and makes the labor even harder. It's even worse. And then the people go... *your God hasn't delivered us at all*. Like, I don't know what the Hebrew is, but the English version is like, *He hasn't done it at all*. It's like, *not even sort of done it*. Well, He hadn't started yet. You know, it was going to be a long process. But I think we see this birth of a vision and then death of a vision all throughout Scripture where God gives a vision, and then we're like, *yes*, because He gives it to us, but then we kind of create it, like sort of, kind of, how we think it's going to go...

Vivian: Yeah.



Kelly: ... And then... and then it doesn't happen the way we thought. And then there's a... a resurrection of a vision, or a rearranging of circumstances, and so, I would... just encourage people who are, like, if you're really truly following the Lord and things... life isn't quite working out the way you hoped, that you would be encouraged that the Lord is in it. In fact, I just read this morning in 1 Peter 2, I'm just going to throw this... this out there, cause it was a good reminder for me. Chapter 2, verse 21, "For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." And right before that he says, "When you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God." So, the point being is, this morning I was reading that and I thought, *Lord, why do I think as a believer that if I follow You, and if I do what You say, that it's just going to be great.* Like, where did we get this theology?

Elisa: Right.

Kelly: Like, Peter actually says, *no, if you do what is right for the Lord and you are suffering as a result... that actually brings favor because that's what He... he goes out... he says, that's what you are called to.* We are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, that there is going to be a measure of suffering. Not... certainly not the whole life, the whole Christian life, cause there's going to be plenty of celebration, and plenty of things that... miracles that the Lord does, and plenty of blessings and joy. But part of the blessing is that we... we share in the fellowship of the... of the sufferings. And so, I also think to... just to encourage others that sometimes we think we've done something wrong, or...

Vivian: Right.

Kelly: ... God's mad, or we've messed up...

Vivian: Right.

Kelly: ... or we didn't have enough faith, or we missed it somehow, or... and it's like, *hey, no part of this walk is that there's going to be some hardship in life, and that's not a mistake. That's part of the road...*

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... *that we're called to walk.* So, I think hopefully that's encouraging for us today.

[Music]



Jade Gustman: Hey friends, I'm just popping in to tell you about a new *God Hears Her* reading plan called *Cast Your Cares*. This 10-day reading plan is available in our show notes, so be sure to check it out.

Vivian: I love that. I remember sitting down and having lunch with you the first time we met in person, and you had shared with me about how when you headed down a certain path of wanting to be famous and wealthy and all of the... all of these things, and then the counter of that, and you ended up writing a Bible study based on that, and I would love for you to just, if you could, like, in... in a few lines, kind of share, like, the message that God gave you to teach, to write out, and even, like, how those things came to you as you were being rearranged in many ways.

Kelly: Yeah. So, that's the... Bible study called *No Other Gods: The Unrivaled Pursuit of Christ*, and it's really about the modern-day idols that we have in our lives. So, it's very easy...

Vivian: That's what it was, yes.

Kelly: ... to look in the Old Testament and go, *oh, well, why are they bowing down to graven images and why are they bowing down to stuff that they say is a god*, but we know it's not really a god. *Why are they worshipping the god of coffee...* you know, or whatever. I'm making stuff up. But... but... but then we... we are absolutely that... we do that all day. We put our hope in where our child is going to get into college, you know, we...

Vivian: That's right.

Kelly: ... put our hope in our health, or in our bank accounts, or in...

Elisa: Yeah.

Kelly: ... what part of... what status of society we're in, or, I mean, there's idolatry everywhere that we deal with, but we just don't think of it in those terms. And so...

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... there's one... author, I can't remember his name, but he... he termed it *functional gods*. You know, what... what functions as a god for you? Is it your bank account? Is it your career? Is it your child? Is it a spouse? Is it your status in life? And so, just really, I think, the Lord really helped me at... with the



crumbling of the music career, but also this work's never done. It doesn't matter if you move into Bible teaching, or if you move into authoring, or if you move into the school, the academic world. It doesn't matter where you are, whether you're in secular or sacred, whatever, vocation, idolatry is an issue when anything becomes God other than Jesus. That's what that study is about.

Vivian: Yeah. No, I love that because it pairs with what we even started our conversation with, that there is a sense that we were created to worship. And we misdirect our worship, and we bow down to idols, whether all the things that you mentioned, and I'm sure I can come up with five more, and Elisa could come up with five more, and our listeners could come up with even five more after that. But we were... we were hardwired to worship. And there's this beautiful full circle in my mind... even in this conversation, about even how your friend talked about what true worship was, and that sense of there are the sufferings that we go through, and there is character that's produced based on our response to those hardships... are we able to retain a tender heart towards...

Kelly: Yes.

Vivian: ... the Lord and towards other people, and how do we keep that right view of who God is, and who other people are, and who we are...

Elisa: Yeah.

Vivian: ... in the midst of challenges and difficulties, and recognizing that God has a bigger story that involves the whole world. Like, when I think about... our conversations about the Old Testament, it was like, God intended the whole time that the surrounding nations would see the people of God, and come and worship in the new city, in the new Jerusalem. Like, that was part of God's plan, and it kind of comes to its full conclusion in Revelation and all of the beautiful imagery that we've learned about, but this whole picture of worship. Worship is more than singing songs on a Sunday. that worship is so much more encompassing of the whole of who we are, but I... I think it just underscores this idea of worship and then idolatry ss misplaced worship, so...

Kelly: Yeah.

Vivian: ... yeah. All of that is...

Elisa: Good work.



Vivian: ... so, so very good.

Elisa: I'm thinking about, again... those moments in our lives when we are enduring the rearrangement, and I really appreciate that you pointed out that there is hardship associated with following hard after God, and in hardship, we worship as you were just saying, Viv, and we need to pay... attention to where... where we're tempted to place functional worship in... with idols instead of with God. I'm also struck by how riveting it is for us to focus on God's character when we're being rearranged because it can feel capricious. mean, manipulative, shortsighted, crazy... when our lives go off in a different direction and we're like, *this is not what I was planning on, God, and it's not what I've been praying for, and it's really not what I thought You were revealing to me.* How has God's character spoken to you in the rearrangements that He's provided for you?

Kelly: Well, I think we... you do get to know His character when you go through these times because when you get through them, you realize, *oh, You weren't being capricious, You weren't being crazy, You weren't being manipulative. You actually were writing a good story.* It's hard sometimes in the middle of it, but I do think that after we go through several of these, we begin to realize the Lord really is good. He really is faithful. A friend of mine recently said that God is good, He does good, and He does not withhold good. And I love those three things, and that when we really believe that even in the middle of loss and hardship and tragedy, we begin to see that He's good. And I think too, Elisa, that's why Paul writes about it, Peter writes about it that our... our character and our faith is refined, it's purified, it's built up. If we didn't go through the hard times when we questioned the character of God, how would our faith even be refined? How would we go through it? And so, I always say that it's a... a silly thing, but it... the only time that we can worship the Lord in hard times is in hard times. We can worship him in good times, but the only way to truly, like, have faith in Him in the hard times is in the hard times...

Elisa: Yeah.

Kelly: ... There's, you know, while we're walking through something difficult...

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... we have an opportunity to... to put our faith in Him, to worship Him in the middle of it. And I believe that the Lord is so pleased with that, because when it is confusing and He still sees us coming to Him saying, *I still choose You...*

Vivian: Yeah.



Kelly: ... *I believe You, I believe, help my unbelief*, I think He really delights in that.

Elisa: And just as the... the Word points out, you know, that we can see God bringing us through the difficult rearrangements, it sure points out His character. You know, it, just over and over...

Kelly: Yes.

Elisa: ... it... it explains and defines His character.

Kelly: Yeah.

Vivian: Yeah. And I think, too, of the... the phrase, *a sacrifice of praise*, that there... it's costly sometimes, you know? It's costly to continue to live yielded, and to live with a tender heart in the midst of circumstances that we cannot control...

Kelly: Yeah.

Vivian: ... and I... I think we understand cognitively that there's not a lot that we're in control of, and so, there's just real disappointment, and how do we remain pliable, and soft, and tender towards the Lord.

Kelly: And the character of God, I think that is the key, right? We get so stuck on what God has done or hasn't done, but like, Elisa, you said, if it... if we go back to who He is, that's the anchor, because we're not going to always understand what He does but His character...

Vivian: Yes.

Kelly: ... and I think we so often... we want to know what can God do for me. I was struck by when God calls Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses says, *well, who am I? Who am I?* I mean ours... obviously, he's a shepherd, the Egyptians hate shepherds. He's a Midian. I mean... he's been in trouble with a Pharaoh before. He's like, *who am I?* Well then God says, *well, I... don't worry about who you are. I will be with you.* And then Moses essentially says, *well then who are You? If You're going take the... lead the people out, and who am I going to say to the Israelites is sent me*, right? *Who are You?* And that's when He's like, *well, I am who I am.* He's like, *oh great, okay.* But then He says, *but I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.* In other words, *I'm the... I'm the covenant God...*

Vivian: Yeah.



Kelly: ... *I'm the... I'm a God that is for My people, that will keep His promise with His people.* And then, you know, you get through the whole story, and then all of a sudden God becomes redeemer. He becomes salvation. He becomes all of these things, but all of this is rooted in His character, and is who God is. And I think you bring up such a good point, cause for so long I'm just like, *Lord, I just need You to do God stuff, God's size stuff for me.* And falling way short of like, *wait, no, no, no. I... I need to know who God is.*

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: That's where this all has to start and who... what His character is...

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... And that has been a game changer for me. I just walked through it the last several months, just a really hard time, and that really doesn't make any sense. I cannot make any sense, but I have gone back to who God is, and if I believe that He doesn't have anything up His sleeve...

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... That He doesn't have any darkness in Him, **that** He can be trusted, that He's all powerful, that He's all good...

Vivian: Yeah, yeah.

Kelly: ... that He's not capricious... that is what has kept me steady. And, Vivian, to your point, not hardened...

Vivian: Yeah, yeah.

Kelly: ... cause it's easy to get really hard, but if I keep going back to the goodness of God... and His sovereignty...

Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... and that it is bigger than me, bigger than what I can understand...



Vivian: Yeah.

Kelly: ... that gives me a tenderness.

Elisa: Because character really is expressed in action. So, in... in and in inaction, you know... when we know what...

Kelly: That's good.

Elisa: ... His character is, we can depend on whatever is happening or not happening because He is who He is.

Kelly: That's good.

Vivian: And I think it's so beautiful, too, cause as your friend, Kelly, I've also seen how your community has rallied around you and your family and friends to remind you of who God is...

Kelly: Yes.

Vivian: ... too. We invest into the Word of God to realign our thinking so that we're thinking rightly on Yahweh, Yahweh, a God who is compassionate.

Elisa: I wonder if... if we could ask you, Kelly, to pray for those in a rearranging season. Would you speak words over those of us who are struggling in the rearrangement and wondering, what the heck? What the heck?

Kelly: Yes, yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely. Father, we thank You that You are a God who is with us and I... I hear those words afresh with my friends or my brothers and sisters who are walking through it, who are going through a hard time, who are wondering where You are. I hear Your words to Moses say, "I will be with you. I will be with you." *I am with you in the hard, in the terrifying, in the change, in the rearrangement.* And then, of course, we get to Matthew's Gospel in chapter 1, where the angel of the Lord says to Joseph, [Music] "You will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Emanuel God with us. And so, we thank You, Lord Jesus, that You have not left us alone. And that in the middle of the hard, You have not forsaken us. You will not leave us. You are here with us. Your presence is with us and, Lord, help us to say, *that is more than enough.* Lord, help Your presence to overwhelm us in the most beautiful way. Let us see Your glory. Let us experience the filling of the Spirit. Let us



experience You in community, and let Your presence be the prize, the reward, the blessing. And Lord, help us to know Your character, to see it in Scripture, to believe it, and then as a result, to trust that You have all things in Your hands. And so, I pray for that encouragement over my friends. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

[Music]

Elisa: Amen, Kelly. What a beautiful closing prayer. Well, friends, be sure to check out our website to subscribe to our email list, read the newest blog article, or check out the *God Hears Her* books and devotionals. Find all 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. [Music] Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Jade Gustman and Mary Jo Clark. We also want to thank Russ, Milo, and Lily for all their help and support. Thanks everyone.

Vivian: Our Daily Bread Ministries is a donor-supported nonprofit ministry dedicated to making the life-changing wisdom and stories of the Bible come alive for all people around the world.

[Music]

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