

AT S8E8: Follow the Leader - Jesus, The Good Shepherd

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:00:00] Hello, Welcome to season eight of the Abiding Together Podcast. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement on your journey with Jesus Christ. My name is Sister Miriam James Heidland and each and every week I am joined by two of my very dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. This podcast is born out of our friendship and sharing all kinds of things together: our walk with Jesus, our insights, the lessons, we are *still* learning, our joys, sorrows, tears, and laughter. And you are most welcome on the journey with us. You can find out more information about all of our episodes at abidingtogetherpodcast.com. But for now, grab a cup of coffee, settle in, and welcome home.

Hello, and welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together Podcast. And we're excited to launch a three-part series on the Person of Christ as he reveals himself through the scripture. So you heard from Dr. Swafford last week about the importance of the head and the heart and the scripture in our daily life. And so we can't wait to break this open with you and journey with you and also to encounter the Lord ourself in new way. And so, as usual, we've been already talking on this call for over an hour and like talking about all things good, true, and beautiful. And Heather, you and I, were just talking about the fall colors in Canada, where you are right now. And can you tell us about the blueberry bushes? I did not realize that they turn that color. But I love that.

Heather Khym: [00:01:35] Yeah. We live in an area where we're like the raspberry capital of Canada. Um, but there's lots of blueberry fields everywhere. So we live kind of in the farmland and all the blueberry fields, the bushes turn bright red in the fall. And so it's just gorgeous. Cause we live on this Ridge and overlook all these farm lands and there's just like the sea of red blueberry bushes right now. It is absolutely gorgeous. I'm just loving, loving the fall. Loving pumpkin loaf, bonfires, and all the fall colors.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:02:05] It can't be that early. I don't think you can. Cause I know Michelle, you and I are still baking here.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:02:10] Oh my goodness. Like we had like a little bit of fall for like two days and then it hopped right back up. I'm like people, I was laughing cause I was watching my nephew for my youngest sister. She just had her second baby. And I was down in st. Pete, Florida. And I took him to a pumpkin patch. And all these people were dressed up in flannels, a cute fall wear - it was 90 degrees! I'm like, this is ridiculous.

Heather Khym: [00:02:36] You're like - you're all posers.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:02:38] Seriously. And I was like, as the sweat is just dripping down my shirt, I'm like, are you kidding me? Like, no.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:02:44] Why were they doing that, like for photo ops?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:02:47] I mean, my daughter, Lily looked at me because it's this just like the Instagram capital of the world, like doing it for their Instagram. Like we were just laughing, but I was like, it is hot people. Like we need it to at least be below 70 degrees before you even think about a flannel, but. Yeah, it was so funny. So yes, it is still beautifully

sunshine, but not fall and missing a little bit of the fall-ness right now. How are you doing sister?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:03:10] Hashtag fake fall. Speaking of it - who was it? Was it on our text thread? I was reading something somewhere recently about a really wonderful spiritual author who talked about Fall as the preparation for our own death. Like this, the suffering, this is why fall moves us is because it reminds us of mortality. And before the winter, and I love fall. And I think it's so beautiful. And I had the beautiful experience of being in Milwaukee last week and going out to Holy Hill, there's a Holy Hills, an old German monastery. I think the Carmelites run it now. And there were so many people out and about, and it's one of those moments where everything's green and yellow and red and orange and the fall leaves are falling to the ground as you're walking along with them. Like they have life-size stations of the cross there. So just, Oh gosh, it was just absolutely beautiful. I think there's something about, we talk about beauty often in our podcasts, there's something about beauty that's just so stunning. And you just want to capture that moment and you just, even if Fall is not your favorite season. And when you can just see the beauty of creation, there's just something so wonderful about it.

Heather Khym: [00:04:10] That's true. That's a very deep reflection actually. Like when you think about the beauty of the Fall, but there is a death occurring and just that there is beauty, even in our. You know, the spiritual places that were called to die so that new life can come. I mean, it's so, so deep the reflections, and I love that God does that, that there's this display of beauty where we can deeply ponder our own interior life.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:04:33] Yeah. There's this commercial that I often show to people when I give retreats. And it's this group that asks people one question. And sometimes they say, if you could change anything about your body, what would it be? And there's one particular commercial that says, if you could be any age, what age would you be? It's just a really great revelation of the human heart. And it's funny. Yeah, it's touching. But at the end, one of the women who's 80 years old and they asked her, they said, if you could be any age, what age would you be? And she said, I love being 80. And she's like, it's often said it's the autumn of our years, but then she smiles and she says, but just think about how beautiful autumn is.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:05:08] Oh, I love that.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:05:09] I know just watching people, everybody in the room, no matter what kind of crowds they just all smile. Cause you know, there's something so true about that. And we all know deep in our hearts. We know that life is a journey and there's a beginning and an end and a new birth. So yeah, it's just something about that I think is awesome.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:05:27] It is. And there's that other quote, life begins again in the fall and you feel it when you do get that first crisp morning or that first whatever. You're like, Oh, like there is like a sense of wonder almost the changing of the seasons. And then you feel it again, when you move into advent season, when you light that first candle, it's like, we are liturgical people. We are season people. We talk a lot about seasons on this podcast, but hey, it's in our DNA people! That's why we talk about it. You know, we are liturgical season people!

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:05:56] Welcome to our world.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:05:59] Welcome to our world people here, we are.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:06:01] Speaking of and we're going to dive in in a second. I was thinking when I was walking to mass this morning and it was almost 80 degrees at seven o'clock in the morning, but that's okay. I was thinking of that we're about to embark on a new liturgical season. I know we're going to talk about advent in our upcoming podcasts, but I was thinking it's just a whole new year. That's in one, about a month from today, a little bit more than a month from today. We're going to start a whole new year, just thinking of all this transpired in this last year, this last liturgical year. Gosh, so, you know, so much it just so much.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:06:32] Yes. And so I'm ready to change the calendar to a new season, but I don't want to forget what I've learned in this past season earlier. We can't, and I don't want to wish this time away either.

Heather Khym: [00:06:46] Michelle, do you want to tell our people what we're going to be doing for advent?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:06:50] I'm so excited. We will be doing a four-part series. You don't need to buy a book or anything like that. We will have beautiful cards for you to buy as reminders our things that will be in our shop in November.

Heather Khym: [00:07:01] And they are so beautiful.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:07:03] So beautiful. Yeah, they are.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:07:04] But we really wanted to: Mary has been super big for a lot of it for all of us this year. And we just finished a consecration about Mary's mantle that I talked about earlier on the podcast and it was...the only way I could say is like Mary has become really, three-dimensional. Like, she's more than a statue. She's become very tangible and very real to us. So we are going to be journeying through Mary's motherhood for advent, so that we will have four different themes. I think it's, Mary's Fiat, Mary's hearts. Mary's mantle. What am I missing? There's one more ...warrior, warrior mother. And so I'm saying them out of order, but those are the themes that will be just really, journeying as Mary as mother, and how she's a spiritual mother to us all and how we need her, especially in this time and how she's real. She's not a statue. She's not something that is on a pedestal. She's coming down off her pedestal to embrace each and every one of us in our own personal way. So yeah, we're excited, you know, it was a lot of fun putting it together. And so we can't wait to join you this advent season.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:08:09] That's fun. I love that we just talked about that cause that gives us something fun to look forward to. And today as well I'm really excited about this series also that we're going to dive into with Jesus, revealing his heart to us through the scriptures. So today we're going to talk about how Jesus reveals himself as the good shepherd. And so we have a guiding quote for you and guiding scripture, and our guiding quote comes from Saint Jerome. And this is so beautiful. He says, "I am like the sick sheep, the strays from the rest of the flock, unless the good shepherd takes me on his shoulders and carries me back to his fold my steps will falter and in the very effort of rising, my feet will give

way." And I think it's so beautiful that imagery of the good shepherd taking us on. And Jesus says that it - he takes us upon his shoulders and that reality of what the Lord does. And so our guiding scripture, which is one, so many people are familiar with is Psalm 23. And I'll just read that for all of you, uh, where the psalmist says the Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I lack. In green pastures he makes me lie down. To still waters he leads me, he restores my soul. He guides me along the right paths for the sake of his name. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me. You set a table before me in front of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Indeed goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. So beautiful. Can we all just lay down now? And we're done here people 10 minutes and done. Happy podcast episode.

Heather Khym: [00:09:52] I know I'm literally like closing my eyes listening. I love that scripture, so, so good.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:09:57] So maybe we could talk my dear friends a bit about that. Just the reality of Jesus as the good shepherd and a bit about that scripture passage, and also the quote and just kind of how we have encountered and it continued to do so Jesus as the good shepherd. So Heather, since you just so beautifully spoke there, do you want to share with our listeners a bit about that journey of Jesus, the good shepherd for you?

Heather Khym: [00:10:19] Yeah. I'm so glad that Dr. Andy Swafford last week kind of introduced how to read scripture with not just the head, but the heart. Like this marriage between the two, because it's so important that we read and listen to the word of God for what it is. Jesus is present in his word, and that he wants us to know who he is. And this has been a journey where I've been really diving into the personality of Jesus. And this came up for my husband and then, you know, you're around somebody who keeps talking about it and it all of a sudden becomes part of your journey as well. So Jake was on this thing of like, who was Jesus, really? Like, I don't really know him as a person, like his personality. What was he like? Like he was a guy, you know, like what did he look like? What did he laugh like? What was he like? And I think that the scriptures is such an important way to get into and not just hear it, but go, what does this mean? What is the good shepherd mean? And I think my experience of the good shepherd in my life has been that he provides that he is taking care of me. And I think for so long in my life, I've felt like I need to take care of myself, that it's up to me to figure it out and just learning to rest in the provision of God as my protector. That he is going to provide for me, that he is going to lead me to still waters, where I can rest. That he is watching out for the wolves that might come, that I don't have to do that, that he is the one who is doing that for me. And to just get to know his heart in this. You know, the more that I've even learned about shepherds, like it's so important that we do understand what that's all about. That the shepherd knows the sheep, like really knows the sheep. This is where he spends all of his day, all of his time, knowing them and what they need. Yeah. So my experience of the good shepherd has been a lot of like provision that he is the one that I can trust to lead me.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:12:16] Yeah. There's something when we were even praying about this series is that we want, like. There was two goals I felt like the Holy spirit was illuminating for us, for all of us to be on the journey together was to dive deeper into scripture. You know, the word of God that it would not depart from our mouth day and night that we have

meditated it, that we would chew on it though. It would really be honey for us, like the sweetness of his word, because also like when we get to know Jesus in his word, it transforms our mind. And now more than ever, I think that we have to be people that are rooted in the word and allowing our minds to be transformed, but also we have to encounter personally, not just hearing from the lectionary Sunday at mass, but personally in our personal prayer lives, who Jesus is in scripture, you know. And Dr. Swafford did a beautiful thing about talking how the word of God is living and active. It is not just some book that was written thousands of years ago, it is living and active. It is sharper than a two edge sword. And that two edge sword that even speaks of in scripture is actually a scalpel that cuts our heart. If you look at the translation in Hebrews, what that means, it opens our heart wide open. So when it opens our heart wide open and you encounter Jesus as the shepherd and start researching into that and all the attributes that a real shepherd does. Oh my gosh. Oh, like you were saying Heather, he provides, but like, I think I've even said this on the podcast before he makes me lie down and in restful pastures. Can't you just hear him like sleep, you need to rest because, you know, he makes me lie down. Because you know, for my personality, I won't stop, you know, and he makes me lie down by green pastures. There is nothing by accident in scripture. So even taking it word by word about that, like green pastures, that means it's flushed. It's beautiful. It's in season where he makes me lie down. And even in the scripture, it talks about, he leads me beside still waters and he restores my soul. And like right now, I don't know about you, but like right now I need Jesus to make me, say lie down. And restore my soul by still waters, you know, not like this raging river, but like by still waters that I can rest too. Like don't we all have that sound machine app where you love the still waters where it just makes you like, yeah, it makes you goes bathroom a little bit about that. And so, but it also makes you just exhale. After you go to the bathroom sister, it makes you exhale. And how just, yeah, he's so personal. And that's what he's inviting to. Like, this is who I am get to know me a little bit better.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:14:45] A lot of times for us, you know, in, in society today, the idea of Shepard is largely lost upon us because we're not of an agricultural culture, right? And so many times we see Christ painted as this kind of man is carrying this fluffy sheep on his shoulders. And we don't really understand, unless you do some research, you don't really understand what the necessity of the shepherd. What the shepherd did. What would happen to the sheep without a shepherd. So he's speaking to people in this time of a way that they would understand, because they know that it's so wonderful to delve into that because the spiritual parallel to that is so true. And what he's saying. And I remember many years ago, I was listening to a lecture by a professor at a seminary, and he was talking about this very reality of Jesus as the good shepherd. And, you know, you've listened to talks - it's interesting what sticks with you after all those years. But the one thing that I remember so distinctly about his talk was that he, and maybe I shared this before on the podcast, but he was saying that when estate owners were looking to hire a new shepherd for their sheep, they would always look for the shepherd that had the most scars. Because they knew that shepherd would go to battle with the wolves, with the wild animals and would sacrifice himself for the sheep. And you just think of the wounds of Christ and what he's born for us. And for me as Heather was sharing just about her own story and where Christ the good shepherd comes for her. I think for me, the good shepherd was that I'm worth defending. And for me, the lies that have been in my life, that the bad things happen to me because I wasn't worth defending and nobody cared and nobody's going to protect me. No one's going to fight for me. Nobody's going to show up and defend me from the wolves. And so that

reality of Christ, the good shepherd who loves me so much, he's going to fight for me. And that he's not leaving me to be devoured. And he sees beauty in me and that I'm worth rescuing. For me this was such a tremendous healing instrument in my life of not somebody who's. This is kind of caricature of or cartoonish figure, but a real man. A real man who has born everything that I will ever bear and who to this day is still rescuing me and still fighting for me and still taking my own wounds into his and my scars and his to make them beautiful. It's to me, that's a game changer.

Heather Khym: [00:16:59] Thank you for sharing that. I've never heard that before. I'm just like, wow. That is really, really moving. What you just shared. Thank you for being vulnerable because it's hitting me too. Like, wow. Do I really know? Although I have, yes, definitely. In moments like experienced God fighting for me. I think that's an area that I need to go deeper. You know, that reflection is something that I. Wow, that's powerful. I really want to sit with that.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:17:26] It's interesting when it talks about the Catechism talks about Christ as in the church and Catechism 754 says the church is accordingly a sheepfold, a sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ. It is also the flock of which God himself were told that he would be the shepherd and who sheep, even though governed by human shepherds are unfailingly nourished, and led by Christ himself. The good shepherd and Prince of shepherds who gave his life for his sheep. The Lord sends us and we talk about our priests and we talked about pastor even. I didn't really realize that the word pastor even comes from shepherd - it's an English translation of a variation of shepherd. And God sends us priests as Catholics. And he sends his priest to people, to pastor us, to bring us into Christ, but really ultimately, and they are when they live out the beauty of that call, which is stunning, they live out the heart of Christ himself, but it's always Christ. Unfailingly, who nourishes us and who gives his life for us. And who's tending to his bride tending to his sheepfold. And even when you read the gospel of John and just the beautiful ways the Lord expresses his heart for us as his bride, as his sheep, that he is the only way through. And the Christ is the one who is the gateway. He's the one who protects, who defends and who, as Michelle was saying, leads us to restful water so he can speak to us so he can bring us into communion. And that reality of one who will never leave us nor forsake us, is something profoundly relevant, especially to our lives today. That many times we feel like, like Jesus says, we feel like sheep without a shepherd. And he's saying to us, no, that's not true. I'm here with you and I will never leave you nor forsake you. Okay. Yeah.

Heather Khym: [00:19:00] And I think for a lot of people, like, even right now, as you were saying that what's crossing my mind is the way that the shepherds have failed me, or failed our people, failed our church. You can't help, but think of that because they do and they disfigure the face of the true shepherd when that happens. You know, like you said sister, when they live it out well, this is who they resemble. They are the image of Christ for us as the good shepherd. But when they don't. They disfigure his face and this goes back to he restores my soul. Jesus, for many of us needs to restore our image of the shepherd. That that is not who God is. That when our shepherds have failed us, they are not imaging the good shepherd. They are not imaging the face of God, rather, they disfigure it. And so those things are not lost. God wants to and can restore all the places that we have been failed by a shepherd. And that he can go there. And I've experienced, I know all of us have experienced that in our life where we have old wounds that have persisted in our heart that have been very painful areas that God has gone back to restore those places. And we can live in a new

place now. I think that's really important for many of us that we allow the good shepherd to restore the broken images that we've encountered along the way.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:20:19] Yeah. And I think for a lot of us, like what is going on even in this time and the world, there is a crisis of leadership. There is like across the board. And we're not going to get into all the particulars or anything like that on this podcast, but there is a crisis of leadership. So. It really comes down to, and I was even thinking about the other day and I'm like, Oh my goodness. It's so in our human nature. The Jewish people for so long were like, just give us a King, just give us a King and aren't we the same way just give us a good leader. Just give us a good leader, do this, do this, give us a good Bishop, whatever, give us this, this fill in the blank, whatever it is. And the Lord's like, but let me lead you. You know, let me lead you. You're still looking to man-made ways instead of divine ways to allow me to lead you. Now, I'm not giving an excuse to the leaders that are not good leaders. But what I'm saying is. Ultimately our eyes have to be on the good shepherd and allow him to lead us in paths of righteousness for him. And when it goes on to say, like, I walked through the Valley of death and I fear no evil because your rod and staff will save me. Like, all right, what is a rod and staff for? One was used as like a walking stick and the other was to fight prey that, I mean, like enemies that came against the sheep. And I think it was our friend, I can't remember which priest it was, but I think it was Fr. John Burns that said to me, he was talking with a bunch of seminarians. I think I'm getting this right. But he was saying to me, if you're called to be a Bishop or a Shepherd, you better know how to wield your rod and staff well. You know, and I was like, amen. Amen, like use it to protect your sheep, use it to lead boldly, use it to lead rightly, but for us that we have to look to Jesus. Like, Lord how are you going to lead me in this time? You know? And I think it goes on to tell us in scripture, you know, in John, he says my sheep know my voice. And I think if there's anytime in history, the time is now to learn what the Shepherd's voice sounds like. Learn what is the voice of the shepherd and what is the voice of the enemy and what is the voice of the world? You know, because I think there's three different voices. We listen to the world, the enemy and Jesus. And what does his voice sound like? We've talked about this before on the podcast, but his voice always convicts and it doesn't condemn, but his voice calls out who we are in our truest being and calls, who he is like, let me be this for you. And I just like, we have to be able to learn that sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, say, okay, this voice is not the voice of the Lord. This is the voice of the enemy or the accuser. This is not the voice of a shepherd that comforts and provides. And for me, I was just laughing because I've mentioned this a couple of times, but like, okay. One of the things I struggled with most was probably like a sin of comfort, you know, and just working on it like on virtue and whatever. And I was like, Lord, why did they keep on putting your finger on this one comfort? Because he's like, I want to be able that you come to me for comfort and not these things, like me. And he keeps on reiterating and reiterating this point. And it was so funny, and this is what I love like, and this is what our hope and prayer for all of you are because the Lord will speak to us in different ways. What works the way the Lord speaks to Heather is different than the way the Lord speaks to me or sister than me, but you know, but also I think we forget how it just how stinkin fun the Lord is too. Like he is a God of fun and creativity and wonder. And so I've been really being praying with this. Like you are a God of, you want me to come to you for comfort? So yesterday I was in Fairhope, Alabama and I walked into a gift shop and they had this pillow. I kid you not I actually took a picture of it and I'll put in the show notes. It says "GOD OF COMFORT" , like big bold letters. And it was, I mean, I was like, Lord, you're so much fun. Like, he's like, Tou get the point, Michelle, like I'm putting it in bold baby. Like he's

like follow the leader. Like that's what I was really thinking. Follow the leader, I'm the God of comfort. And I think that is what he's asking us to really lean in and hear his voice. And usually we can only hear his voice when we're really close when he's holding us on his shoulders.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:24:10] That's just so great on so many levels. And if I'm not mistaken, I believe the other, the part of the staff, the crook and the staff has to snatch the sheet when they were about to wander off. So the hook is to grab them and pull them back. And that's why Bishops, if you're Catholic and you see a Bishop with a crozier that's, it's the Shepherd's staff. And that's what it's saying is to ward off the enemy. And it's also to snatch that sheep back and put them in the fold. When they're about to wander off. And do we not need that? We need Jesus to be like, Oh girl, we are not, you're not going that way. Let me just, I'm going to snatch you back. I love you. I'm going to snatch you back. And I think it's very fitting. I know we're kind of coming to the end of our time here, but I think it's very fitting that the Psalm was written by King David, who is a man who has sinned, who has been oppressed, who has been on the run, who has been hunted down by the King of Israel who has feared for his own life, who had a chance to destroy, who's sin affected his family. I just, this is a man of great, I guess, for lack of better word adventure. Let's just put it like that.

Heather Khym: [00:25:07] And he was also a shepherd.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:25:08] Yes! And he's a shepherd and just, it's just so poetic about the Lord. The Lord doesn't waste a thing friends. The Lord does not waste a thing in our lives ever. There's nothing in our lives that is extraneous to what the Lord is doing. And from this man with this epic adventure of his life, who's failed, who's triumphed, who's succeeded, who's wept: this is the prayer of his heart. You know, the Lord is my shepherd. Lord, just lead me to pastures. Call me back to your house. And would that whatever we're facing in our life right now, would that not be the prayer of all of us? Just Lord lead me, lead me, lead me back.

Heather Khym: [00:25:48] There's a couple of other scriptures that they're talking about the shepherd and like in Isaiah 40, it says he will feed his flock, like a shepherd and carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. For some of us, we need that. We need to, we need to sit in prayer and say, Jesus, I need you to shepherd me and hold me close to your heart. Right now, many of us are just longing and aching right now for the tenderness of God. And if we just make time for that, like to sit with him and allow him to be that for us, of course, he's going to hear our cry and, and also about, you know, the, the shepherd that goes out that leaves the 99 that goes after the one that's lost. Like for some of us, we need to be found. We need to just put ourselves in a position to be found by God. He is coming after us. And if we would just stop and let him find us, and that just takes like an openness in our heart to be like, of course he's going to find us, but I want you to find me, God, I realize that I'm lost here. So I would just encourage everybody to take some time. I know I want to sit with some of the things Sister said and Michelle said, And some of these scriptures to just go like, where do I need the good shepherd in my life right now? Where do I need them to shepherd me, to protect me, to provide for me to rest peace, restoration guidance, anointing abundance, all of those things. And I would just encourage our listeners to take some time, to sit with the good shepherd, to get to know him as a person.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:27:12] Yeah. And that like sister was saying, like, he's the hook part of the staff. Because we, I mean, I could laugh because I tell a lot of the girls that I mentor and disciple. Okay. We're prone to wander baby. We are prone to wander. So we need these guar rails on our path because we, there's something about us that is prone to wander. And for me, like, I'm like, Oh, look, it they're over there. Squirrel. And I could go off chasing a butterfly, you know? And when I need to be on this path, But allowing, giving, allowing the Lord's permission to like, Lord, call me back when I'm prone to wander, convict me when I'm prone to wander, you know, let me hear your voice louder. I mean, I think we've often said on this podcast allow the Holy spirit to do the heavy lifting. Holy spirit convicte me when I'm off the path, bring me back into your fold, bring me back into your arms. And we want this just to be - like one of my prayers, really and I know I'm going to probably harp on this a lot in the next coming weeks. One my prayer really is this podcast to be a foretaste of your prayer life for you to go deeper. Do not stop at this podcast. We want you to open up the scripture. Look at the scripture of Psalm 23. Look at the scripture in John, you know, we give you these references. Google, what does a shepherd do? Like look and see where the Holy spirit takes you. We just want this to be just a little teaser for you, for the Holy spirit to animate and illuminate your own personal prayer life, you know, and we would love to hear what he reveals to you. You know, because we are just on the journey with you. The song, I think it's The Shepherd Song by Amanda Cook and it says...

Heather Khym: [00:28:44] oh I love it.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:28:45] I mean, the first couple of lines it says in the process, in the waiting you're making melodies over me. And your presence is the promise, for I am a pilgrim on a journey and it goes on, it says, you're the strength that comes from within, good shepherd of my soul. Take my hand and lead me on. And one of the other lines, they use that and it's in scripture too. He makes my path secure. And I know for a lot of us in this time and a lot of unrest still, like we are so unsettled. But we have to allow him to guide us to follow the leader because he makes our path secure because they're secure in him. And he erases our fear. And that is not only my prayer for myself and Heather and sister, but for you all. And I'm just going to tell you, I'm going to push a little in the next couple of couple of weeks, because I want you to experience all the Florida has for you. And so do sister and Heather, so, okay. I'll get off my little box now

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:29:40] It's beautiful. We certainly, we certainly need that. We need to hear that. And I think before we jump into our one things here, I think what's happening is that we're coming into a deeper relationship of who Jesus says he is. And all of us have ideas of who Christ is. And we have those ideas hit up against our reality of all the things we believe about ourselves, believe about God and what Jesus is saying over and over and over again to each one of us, he's saying, this is who I am. This is who I am, and I am the truth. And I'm going to tell you the truth. I'm going to reveal the truth to you and have a home here. I'm your shepherd. I'm not leaving you. So I think what you're both saying is so pertinent to press into that. To press into that and allow whatever we believe about ourselves, whatever we believe about Christ to come to the surface. And talk to him about that so then he can speak the truth about who we are and who he is, because that's what Christ does. He reveals who he is and who we are. And he's bringing us, like we said, at the very beginning into communion in every place. So that's the journey friends. That's holiness. That's how it works.

All right. So my dears, shall we jump into our one things Michelle Benzinger would you like to bless every single person right now by sharing your one thing? Not in a sneaky way. Cause girl we're going to let you do that. I love that when you did that on the other podcast that made me laugh. I was going for a walk and just started laughing.

Heather Khym: [00:31:02] I know. I was like, what are we doing for our one thing? And then I listened to it. I was like, what? Michelle Benzinger just snuck in there.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:31:08] It was awesome people. If you haven't listened to our second part, uh, episode with Fr. Mark, Mary, I snuck in there and did all the one things. I wanted to have, like a theme song. I've got the power going in the background, but yeah, figured that might be a little bit.

My one thing is like I referenced to earlier is I have a new nephew. His name is Quinn David, a cutie. And my youngest sister is significantly younger than I am. My mom had she's the baby out of all of us. So I was able to go down and keep her two year old while she had her second child. And there's just something so fun because I don't have littles anymore. My youngest is 11, which feels so weird and there's just something about two year olds and just their fun- ness and their wonder. And they are, and to all the moms that are in that season with newborns and little ones and pregnant, like I have six children. I have three and four years I have forgotten. I am praying for you. How exhausted I was like, it's almost like I had amnesia. I was like, how did I forget the shoes, the car seats, the diaper bags? Like you forget. And just like this season with children, I think is emotionally exhausting. That season is physically and emotionally exhausting. So, to all of our young moms, you are my one thing, you are my ones. We're praying for you with your little sleep-deprived selves and sippy cups and shoes and car seats. I am praying for you because you're in the trenches and we see you and we love you. You know, it is. You can do it. It's a beautiful hard season, so you can do it. Yes. Heather, what about you?

Heather Khym: [00:32:42] Okay. I have a couple, one things. The first one was I realized that we, I know, well, this is for our listeners. I just realized that we didn't announce this here. We just did on social media, but a few weeks ago we just crossed 5 million downloads and that is just. Yeah, mind blowing to us. So thank you to all of our listeners and for sharing the podcast for listening to us. Yeah. We were just blown away by all of that. I don't even know what to say about it. We're a bit speechless about it. So praise the Lord. And my second one thing is a new video series by Chris Stefanick and Augustine Institute called The Search. You can find it on Formed.com. I don't know where else you can find it. But I watched the first episode yesterday and I was so moved by it. It was so good. It was so beautifully done, but it's just asking the very beginning questions, which I don't really care where you're at in the journey. We all need to go back there. What are we looking for? What are we aiming for? Where we come from? Where are we going? And Chris just does a wonderful job with that. And in archdiocese of Vancouver, coming up November 5th, they are going to start doing this online on the behold website. And you can join in, and we do a panel discussion after each episode to talk about it. And I was a part of the first one with Chris Stefanick and some other wonderful people from the archdiocese. So if you're interested in joining in that and doing the search, you can go to beholdvancouver.org under the events area and it's called The Search and that's going to start November 5th from 7:00 to 8:30 Pacific time.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:34:16] That is so cool. I want to do that. It's very neat. I think to talk about, what you guys were talking about our young moms and all the women that are in the trenches. I think that was some of their favorite parts of Father Mark Mary's episode, that part two, where he talked about young moms doing the corporal works of mercy. And so many women on our Facebook page were like, Oh, you have no idea. I thought it was just so great, like he listens he knows. Thank you for acknowledging what true it. That's the eternal work. That's the eternal difference. It's such important, beautiful sacrificial work. I think that's something that we all saw with Amy Coney Barrett during her Senate hearings of, you know, here's a mom of seven who just loves her kids and loves her husband has been married over 20 years and who is about to be nominated to the Supreme court. And is stunning. A stunning example of the feminine genius: articulate, holy, smart, loving, kind, warm, just really a wonderful thing. So many women were saying, yeah, I could see my, like welcome to our life. You know, and in a certain way. So I thought amen to the feminine genius, which is not my one thing, but it is always my one thing cause we're women. So, and amen to that. I'm actually, my one thing is it was actually not even timed this way, but. I think Dr. Swafford talked about this because he was part and parcel of this, but it is the great Adventure Bible put out by Ascension Press, which is so good. And I think it's very timely. Like I said, I wasn't even thinking of it specifically for this because we're talking about scripture, but I love that new Bible that came out from Ascension Press thing that came out last year and I just finally acquired a copy of it. And it's just absolutely wonderful. So if you're looking for a new Bible that, it's compact. Yeah. There it goes. Michelle's holding it up right now that it's a nice size. Like you have no idea what it looks like.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:36:03] You see how cute my tabs are though my Bible? Like, look, I paid one of my children to put it on because I would never sit that still to do that. But anyway, go ahead. Okay.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:36:12] And I mean, maybe this is a foray into our first video episode. You just never know maybe one day friends, you never know. So I'll, we'll put the link up there to where you can find it on the Ascension press website. And it was a great way to start a brand new liturgical year. A brand new series in the scripture, just jumping in and getting a new Bible and something that's, you know, a great translation and how offers all kinds of helpful tips in the text as well. So that's what my one thing is so. It has been delightful to spend time with the two of you. Again, people often say, I love your conversations on your podcast. And many times people, we have an outline for each podcast, but what you're hearing my dear friends is you're hearing our hearts unfold in real time. And we don't ever know where the conversation's going to go. We have ideas of where we'd like it to go. But what happens before you is things that happen in our hearts as we spend time together. So I always learn from Michelle and Heather and I am just really edified. Uh, I love you both very much and just who you are as women and sisters and daughters on the journey and wives and mothers. And I just love you. So I just wanted to say that

Heather Khym: [00:37:15] I love you too friends.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:37:16] I love you too.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:37:17] Such a blessing to spend time with you. So dear friends press in this week to the good shepherd who loves you and who even now is singing over you. Who's leading you to restful waters and wants to share his heart with you. And he

never leaves you nor forsake you. So until next week we will be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

Thank you so much for listening to this week's episode. If you liked it, would you please share it with a friend? We encourage you to head over to our website abidingtogetherpodcast.com, where you can find all the show notes, links to our one thing, transcripts, group discussion questions for each episode, and beautiful mugs, t-shirts, journals, and prints in our shop. There you can also subscribe to receive our weekly email with links to each new episode and all of his content. We'd love to connect on social media and invite you to follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, so you can catch inspiring and reflections every day. You're also welcome to join our private Facebook group and dive deeper into discussions with our fellow listeners. If the podcast has blessed you would you prayerfully consider financially supporting us? The abiding together podcast is only available due to the generous support of our listeners. There are significant costs associated with creating this content such as tech support, design, website, equipment, and hired staff that we need to be able to continue offering great content to you. Abiding Together is a non-profit 501c3 and all donations are tax-deductible. You can make donations of any amount through a website called Patreon, or you can send us a check directly if that's easier. If you donate \$15 or more per month on our Patreon page, you become a tribe member and you will receive monthly individual videos from Michelle, Heather and I, as well as other exclusive content recipes, playlists, downloadable prints, and more. You can find all the information on Patreon at patreon.com/abidingtogetherpodcast. Thank you. And God bless you.