

S11 E01 - Word of the Year, A Year of Favor Part 1

Heather Khym: Hello, friends and happy new year. This episode of the Abiding Together Podcast is brought to you by Pink Salt Riot. This year, we are so excited to once again, be partnering with Pink Salt Riot, to share about their beautiful custom word of the year bracelets, necklaces, and key chains. And to give you, our listeners, a special discount. If you've been a listener for a while, you will know that the word of the year is something that's been very important to us on this show. And it's been fun to memorialize each word. With a custom piece from Pink Salt Riot. Their word of the year pieces are designed and handmade by a team of women in their little pink store called the Riot House in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And their mission is to help you live out of the truth of what God says about you. They see creating these word of the year pieces as a beautiful way to assist you in living out the story God is writing in your life this year and to make your word of the year something that you will see and remember often throughout the year, but you need to hurry. They only make their custom word of the year pieces through February 15th. So order as soon as possible to memorialize your word of the year for 2022, also as a special gift Abiding Together listeners can get an exclusive 15% discount on all regularly priced items in their order with the code `abide15`. To check them out, visit pinksaltriot.com and hit the declare your word button, or head to the show notes and click the link. We hope you enjoy this episode. God bless you, friends.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hi friends, and welcome to Season 11 of the Abiding Together Podcast. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement in your journey with Jesus Christ. Every week, I'm joined by two of my very dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. And we talk about all things Christ, about life, about beauty, about sorrow. We laugh, we cry, you'll fit right in. So grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together Podcast and to the very first episode of 2022 and the very first episode of Season 11 and we've had massive technical difficulties so far try number three. So I think this is a, just kind of a testament to the beauty of all the Lord's going to do this season. So my dear wonderful friends, Heather and Michelle happy new year.

Heather Khym: happy new year!

Michelle Benzinger: happy new year we're back. We were just talking about it. We're back from outer space. We will survive technical difficulties and 2021, we are here and we are excited to be here with one another

Heather Khym: Because we have learned to pivot and do all the things that we need to do now. So here we go.

Michelle Benzinger: So little technical difficulties? That's nothing, we can do this, we can do this. We lived through a worldwide pandemic, we could do anything.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Some of the memes at the end of 2021 were so funny. Like people just so over 2021 and I think the world collectively was like, we'd like to turn the page, please.

Heather Khym: I think we said that last year too, but seriously.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: we'll see what we'll see what happens, what the Lord's going to do this year, and we've got a lot of fun stuff this season - season 11, we're going to finish our identity series on bride and mother, which is going to be on video later. We're going to do a fun new Lenten study. We're going to talk about our word of the year today. We're going to rejoin all of our listeners. We've got Heather Khym has a book coming out. I mean, girl, like it's, it's amazing what's going to happen. Yeah.

Michelle Benzinger: It is amazing, some great, beautiful things this year.

Heather Khym: And I like that we're like switching up a lot of things this season. We have some video stuff, but in between, we're going to have our Lenten book study, which I can't wait. We're going to talk about that at the end of the episode. I like that we're kind of doing a lot of different things, so I hope that it will just bless our listeners, this season, in many different ways.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, that's always our heart. That's always our heart. And we get to hear each other's word of the year today, which you know

Heather Khym: I can't wait. You guys, this was like a big secret. I felt like we had to hold on to way too long because we never talk about it with each other until this is happening. So I can't wait. I can't wait

Sister Miriam James Heidland: To the main event here. So our quote, for our episode today comes from the beautiful St. Gemma Galgani and she says this, "During this new year I resolve to begin a new life. I do not know what will happen to me during this year, but I abandon myself entirely to you my God and my aspirations and all my affections will be for you. I feel so weak, dear Jesus, but with your help, I hope and resolve to live a different life, that is a life closer to you." A life closer to you. And even as we read that, I'm not sure how that strikes both of you, but even as we read that, I was just thinking of this is airing January 24th. So people

we've all made our new year resolutions and half of them are probably falling by the wayside. And so it's kind of like looking at what it means to resolve, but what does it really mean to, and it's good to have bench marks and we need to do that, but what is it to really live a life closer to you? Like what does that really mean? When we talk about that? As we dive into this, um, my dear friends, what, what sticks out to you is we can talk about our word of the year and this quote from St. Gemma, Heather, what is for you pretty pertinent.

Heather Khym: Ha ha when you were reading that, I was like, how does she know? You know, when she said, "I feel so weak, dear Jesus, but with your help, I hope to resolve, to live a different life." I'm like, I do. I mean, it's hard. Like I feel a bit battered from, from everything. I mean, it's different up here in Canada. There's just been more restrictions, which leads to more isolation and loneliness and you know, but at the same time, I'm like, Lord, like, you know, all these things and you know, our hearts, you know, what we need. And just every day I'm more and more convinced. Like he truly is everything that we need. Like, there's nothing that we are looking for, desiring that we cannot find in him, you know, in, in the truest core of our desires. That are good. So, I mean, I want to bring, yeah, I just want to open my heart in a new way to all that God has, surrender more deeply. Let go of my own ideas of what I think things should be. Um, yeah. And just, just trust more deeply. He truly is good. He desires good things for us. And even in the hardship, he's going to make all things new. So how about you Michelle?

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, I think December was challenging. It was challenging on a number of levels, but it was also grace-filled. And I think of anything the last two years have taught myself is that I can hold things in tension. I can hold great joy and great sorrow at the same time where I'm such a pendulum swinger, usually where I think has to be one or the other. And I'm realizing more and more that no, it's holding all these things at one time, and the Lord can allow those both to coexist in my body and my life and my soul at one time. But that he's making all things new. Like I think, um, you know, it was kind of like 2022 decided, I mean, 2021 decided to give us a parting gift. Like, uh, I came down with COVID late Christmas day. And so my family, has gone two years without anyone getting it almost to the day. Here we are almost two years into this. And it was just kind of like, I almost felt like sucker punched, you know, like really? first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me this? Come on Lord, this is how you treat your friends? but then I realized it ended up being a really sweet time with the Lord because I had to slow down and we actually had a trip planned. I had to cancel my part of the trip and all this kind of things. And it was just ended up being a really sweet time with the Lord, but it also just ended up being a time of where I just really like deeper self-awareness in the areas that I have fallen short in deeper awareness of my own weaknesses. And, um, but also just deeper awareness of his goodness, and things that I had to look about look at. And so it was just a deep sadness, like a grieving of some things, you know, which I think

is hard. But I think those things that need to be grieved also have to be named. We've said that a couple of times on the podcast and I just didn't need it to name them, you know, and really be aware of all those things. So coming in with really expectant faith, and hope and realizing that this year, a friend of ours, Sarah Kazmerrick posted something yesterday, um, from a writer that we really love. And it said, "I want to be the one that Jesus trusts". And I want to be the one that Jesus trusts and St. Theresa of Avila says, "he has such few friends that I want to be a good one". And I realized for the first time I want to be a good one. What is on his heart, ask the questions, but what was on his heart for the year. How can I love him better this year? What does his heart need this year? Like, I'm so interested about my own heart ask you know, the Lover of our soul. What is your heart need this year? How can I minister to you? You know, because he is so good. So yeah, Sister, how about you?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, it's just interesting to see kind of how the year unfolds and last year, and just the different movements of our hearts and that just thinking of the name of our podcasts, you know, Abiding Together. And we, we talk about the vine and the branches a lot. We've talked, we've spoken about that a lot over the years, we've been doing this podcast and just the, the places in our life where we try to, to grasp at life through something other than Christ. You know that we live through and with an, in him and yet the places in my own heart where I'm trying to live through something else or with something else or in something else versus Christ. And it just, I guess, you know, I just, I turned 45 if you want a few months ago and there's something about I've had just distinct moments of, and I'm not making light of my age or making, I'm just, I'm just making a statement of like, we're probably like halfway done and on, on a good end, you know, and just, there's been a couple moments lately during Advent, especially of just being very soberly, kind of aware of like this, this, these things matter, like, you know, just in my own heart, I'm just kind of having a sober moments of how, you know, I'm gonna, I'm gonna meet the Lord face to face one day, and I'm going to give an accounting of my life and, and not have like an, as like a fear, like a servile fear, but just the magnitude of our daily decisions of, of what am I, and what am I allowing Christ into the heart within. And am I, am I trying to control and am I trying to, and so I think something that during advent that I was deeply convicted of, or just the areas that the Lord brought to my heart of areas, where I've just been trying to control a lot of things. And I, I, my body was manifesting. I just, all kinds of things were happening. And I did not know it was, it was a way that I hadn't seen. And so I was asking Jesus, sorry. So bring to my heart, the things I don't see, things that you see that I don't see. And that was convicting for me very deeply. And so just the everyday renouncing the spirit and then renouncing my tendency to control. So in the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce control and the spirit of control. And I just ask that you would help me surrender in the places I don't feel safe enough to surrender yet. Right. So, which is why we do that. So this, yeah, it was just like a,

kind of a really deep reset in my soul of that and the weakness of it, the poverty of it, like we talked, we've talked before, about how many times our trauma responses go so deep, they lie next to our procedural memory, the places where we kind of do things with literally without thinking and those things take time of Christ coming into those places over and over and over again. So then I can choose a different response. so that was just really profound. So I'm very interested. It's kind of like, as the Lord gave me a word for the year, which I've been pondering since then because I was really praying about it. I'm like, I don't know. Cause you don't make it, you know, I don't make it up. So I just kind of seeing what resonates yeah. Interesting to see what the Lord will do here in these places.

Heather Khym: So for those who may not have heard our word of the year stuff or encountered that before, um, Michelle, do you want to just give a brief explanation of what it is and why we do that and maybe how they can enter into that process as we?

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, the word of the year is something that we have been doing for the last couple of years, but it's almost a theme for the year. It's something that the Lord really wants to display and show you how he wants to move in your life. You know, it's almost like I always call them like a little north star or a little compass, the way that he wants to lead, you know, each and every one of us. And it's something that a lot has to do with how he wants to, um, how he wants to show his faithfulness and his character in your life. You know, what he really wants to, um, allow to come forth to be birthed into you in a deeper way. Not that it is not there before, but it will be, um, show itself in a new way this year, you know? So like people ask, how do you get your word of the year? One of the things I do is just take time and it really ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate it, ask the Holy Spirit, to reveal a word, a theme, something that he's been working on. And, honestly, I, this year, I didn't know if I was going to have a new word I wanted to keep Lorian. I did not want to give that word up. I love that word. And it is now going to be like a life word for me. I will not give it up. And so I just was hesitant. I was like, maybe you know, I'll keep it for the next year. I can have the same word of the year for the same two, and the Lord in the last couple of weeks of the year, really highlighted the new word of the year. And just, and then not only does he highlight in the illuminate, he confirms over and over again, it's kind of like the new car when you're deciding to buy a new car and then you see the one you like and then you see it everywhere on the road. That's how I feel like the word of the year. Like when I decide what it is and the Lord shows it to me in many, many ways and confirms it.

Heather Khym: I love that and if people are wondering what she's talking about with Lorian, just go back and listen to last year's word of the year episode, that was a great word. So great. Yeah. The Lord moves in mysterious ways.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And I think for the three of us too, we could probably look back at the year and see how our words were woven throughout. So you just see how that, you know, and the little tags we got from Pink Salt Riot, who's sponsoring our episode today. I put that on my travel bag, so I literally saw that word. It reminded me some people have the bracelets and all that, but it's just like, I saw that word over and over and over and over and over again and had to think about it over and over and over and over again. So yeah. What about for you, Heather? How did you see your words from last year woven out woven throughout the year?

Heather Khym: Mine was steady and definitely just learning. I mean, I felt like the Lord was steadying my feet a lot. There was a lot of just feeling like I was barely keeping my head above the surface of the water before that. And I felt like the Lord was lifting me out of that place and saying, I need to teach you how to be steady on this firm foundation, which is me, Heather. There's a lot of things that you've been trying to build your house on sand and build your whatever, trying to find peace here and there and everywhere. I truly want to be the firm foundation under your feet. So, the steadying of my own feet, but also leaning into the steadiness of him, realizing that he is unmoved by the things that rattle me. Nothing is too big for him too hard for him, um, that he has got me and he has got this, whatever it might be. Um, so yeah, I just, just being able to lean further into my own littleness, which allows me to experience his greatness. And, uh, I loved my word of the year last year. There was so, so much rich. Yeah, just meditation and, and movement. I felt like it was really. Yeah, there was a lot of movement in my own heart with that transformation. So I'm grateful, really grateful for it. Okay. But I can't wait, come on.

Michelle Benzinger: I think one more thing about the word of the year. Like you realize if you listen to our podcasts last couple of years, and my husband and I were talking about when he was he and I were sharing our words with each other on new year's day and they build upon one another. It's not like a one and done. They're actually like, I can see like the last couple of years, how one has set up the next year and the setup, the movements of way the Lord has moved in my life? So I could literally go back and almost name those years and they're not just blurs to me spiritually. They actually give some kind of landmark to that year. Ways with the Lord has moved. So they're like my stones of remembrance, almost like in the old Testament, like, this is how the Lord has moved. This is how he has brought me out. Uh, you know, of just different areas. And so you can see spiritual progress. So, yeah. So without further ado, here we go. Heather, why don't you go first?

Heather Khym: I just said, I want to hear yours. Okay. All right. Michelle always wants to go last. We know it's just how it is. Okay. So my word of the year is. Increase. Yeah. So, I was praying for a while, just taking quiet time, uh, lots of mornings and just moments, like praying about it. And then all of a sudden I just

had this really strong image in my mind of my chest sort of being opened up wider, you know, and more space for my heart and what God wants to do interiorly. And that's when the word came. I want to increase. And I was like, increase what? Like there was like expansion, like all these kinds of things. I was like, so curious, like immediately, Lord, what are you saying? And so as I've been praying about it, and I think it's just going to continue to continue to increase, exactly Sister. But unfold really throughout the year, my understanding of this. So the scripture, obviously that jumps to mind is, John, the Baptist, John 3 verse 30, "he must increase. And I must decrease." So already I've been asking, Lord, where are the places that I need to decrease? And where do I need you to increase? Where am I putting myself forward in a way that you are not at the forefront, but I am. so obviously, there's a lot of repentance themes and stuff in there, but also, it's not in a diminishing way, you know what I mean? Like we can sort of misunderstand that sometimes, but, I think God is just increasing my own capacity within, for his heart to beat there for his heart to love more freely in ways that I'm incapable of. So that scripture is definitely on my mind. I also feel like there's another aspect of God wanting to increase my territory, in ministry and in the ways that he's called me to minister to people in my vocation also. So I've been feeling a lot of movement lately of an increase in my own capacity that I feel is really given by him. There's things that I I'm seeing, an increase in my vision to see where He wants me to go and things that he's placing on my heart. And I think before I would've just said, God, I can't do this. I can't do all these things, but there's an ease within me of, I know I can't do all these things, but if you're asking me to start this or do this, or then I'll go out and do it, and I'm just going to trust that you're going to bring other people to come in and fill in all the gaps, because I am fully aware that I'm not capable to do it all. So I don't feel afraid. It's really interesting like already, I don't know, there's an ease. And I'm, I'm seeing like all of these places where I feel like the good news needs to be preached and so much hunger and I, and I'm not overwhelmed by it. And I'm like, Lord, just tell me what you want me to do. And I will, and I will do it. And it doesn't matter if it fits under this umbrella or this, I just want to go where you want me to be. And I want to bring your name and your presence to, to everybody that you want me to reach out to. So. Uh, yeah, so that's it, increase? That's my word. I'm so excited about it,

Michelle Benzinger: girl.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Can I just, can I just say a couple of things about that? Um, we're recording this a couple of weeks, a couple of weeks early. Uh, Heather, did you know that's today's Mass reading? That is literally the Gospel from today. He must increase and I must decrease. I just want to affirm that

Heather Khym: aww, see how the Lord is so fun? I haven't read the readings yet.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: which is really cool. And I also, I love just the image of your, like your chest expanding, like your heart, like the core of your being expanding and, and the what God is doing and the territory and just the beauty. And I love also that you said that you qualified that by saying it's not diminishing because a lot of times we think that, kind of when John St. John, the Baptist says that it's like this unhealthy form of diminishing, but it's the places of really, what you're speaking about is the transformation of Christ in your life, which that's the true decrease because you become more yourself. Does that make sense? I'm just, as you're saying that, I'm just thinking about.

Heather Khym: Yup. Absolutely. Yup. Those were some of my thoughts as well. That's totally it.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah. Like you were saying becoming more of yourself, but it almost reminded me, when she was saying that it's almost like Superman taking off his, Clark Kent outfit, shirt to reveal that he is Superman. but that's who your truest identity is. Yes. like what Sister said, not just diminishing, but becoming who you are and the greatness of the Lord has created you to be, and that it's almost been hidden for such a long season for you, where you feel like, okay, you know, I've been hidden, but the Lord is like, oh, but it's time. You know, it is time to come out to this time to tear off this old garment and let me give you a new garment and close you with righteousness and show who you truly are and all of his glory, allowing His glory to be displayed through you in a greater way. It's exciting.

Heather Khym: interesting that you say that because that was totally, I, I had a, uh, yeah, quite a conversation with the Lord about that, that whole thing. And I, there's a part of me that's scared of that. You know, like the hiddenness is a real thing for me. Like, it's been a very, very long decade of hiddenness and, and at first it was so uncomfortable, excruciating, painful, like scary. Like, I don't want to be hid away. Like what if no one, what if everyone forgets about me, Lord, and will you forget about me and is my life meaningless?

And like all of these different things that race through your mind and your heart, but then there comes a peace in it, of like I'm totally content to be in the hidden place. And then, so to be called out of that place again, you know, once again, you think in some ways you're like, oh, I'm growing. And then something shifts and you're like, I'm scared again, Lord. Like, I don't want to put myself out there. Like I don't. I don't. Yeah, there's just a hesitation in some ways, like deep within, that I obviously, you know, need to bring before God again and allow that to be transformed because what does it mean to experience an increase and it not be about me cause I don't want it to be about me, you know, like I don't, I just do not want it to be about me. That's where the fear comes. It's like, Lord, I don't want to screw this up. I don't want to mess up what you're doing. I don't want to put myself first. I don't

actually want people to see me, although we do, you know what I mean? Like at the deepest core, yes, we want to be seen, but it's like, Lord, I really want this to be about you. I want my desires, my intentions to be pure. So yeah, I think like it being coupled continuously with that theme of repentance is going to be necessary for me to keep things in right order and keep it pure.

Michelle Benzinger: ok Sister, what is your word?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, after much prayer. Uh, so last year my word was received and I can definitely see how this word has, has paved the way from that. My word for the year is secure. Yeah. Yeah. And so I thought it would be surrender, but it's, it's not, it's secure. And that every time I come back to that. And it goes for me, it goes back to St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. I know we've talked about this before, but it's just, it's in my heart, about being rooted and grounded in love and that's like security. And so I was thinking of it's very, it's very beautiful that the Lord. It's it's like a, it's a rooting, even as I hear him say that in my heart, it's like a place, but it's also a disposition and it's also what he's doing, but it's also what he's done.

And so, because in order to be secure, you have to receive first. Like it's like we can't make ourselves secure. It's really ultimately the receiving of unconditional love. It's the receiving of healing love. And when we were reading that book a 33 days to being sheltered in her heart or whatever is by Joshua Elsner, there was one quote in there that I have prayed with every single day for days.

And it's where he's talking about Our Lady. And he says, we are held unceasingly in the arms of perfect love. We are held unceasingly in the arms of perfect love. And when I read that it was like this reverberation went through my soul and I know even for myself in the womb, like my story being in the womb, just the trauma from that.

And of going back to the places of just like having a tremendous fear of abandonment, rejection and shame and all these things and all the, all these places that that's led me in my life to try and mitigate against it, to try to preempt that of the only answer is not hiding the only answer is not grasping.

It's not anything else. It is only allowing the Lord to hold me unceasingly in the arms of perfect love. And that that is true. And I can't tell you how many times where I've been disregulated in a day or I was feeling hurt or I was feeling abandoned or I was just feeling like insecure and just to stop right there, whether at my desk or in an airport or wherever, and just go into the Lord and say, Lord, you hold me right now, unceasingly in your perfect, in your arms of your perfect love.

Like no matter what anybody else is doing or not doing, or what I'm doing or not doing, like, this is what you're doing. And it just, it was very profound. It was very profound. So I'm interested to see how it unfolds and what the Lord continues to do in that. But it, I, it just reverberated through my soul. I'm like, here we go. That's what it is secure.

Michelle Benzinger: I love that friend.

Heather Khym: Um, yeah. I love it too. It's so good. I mean, in there, I'm just hearing like such an openness to letting him love you. Yeah. In an even deeper way. I mean, obviously you're open to letting God love you. That seems so obvious, but you know what I mean?

Like within, there's always places where we resist push away are fearful, you know, because of what might happen. I love that. Oh, I'm so excited to see how that plays out this year.

Michelle Benzinger: And I'm just thinking, because I love that scripture of being rooted and grounded in love and even when you were speaking, I just got this image in my head of, you know the tree, the big living live Oak tree that is in my backyard sister? It's huge. And so I just saw that like your roots were going down even deeper Like even deeper, like so that whatever storm or whatever thing that comes against you, it doesn't matter. One of the things I love about that live Oak tree is that it has been through so many hurricanes and it has not wavered. The trunk of it, the roots of it haven't wavered, but like a branch has maybe fallen off here or there, but I mean, that root system is so deep. And then there's this such a beautiful thing about it because the deeper, your roots go the longer and wider your reach and your branches go, and this is the both, and as you go deeper in the soil of God's secure love, I just think that your reach of healing is going to go even farther and wider, you know? But like you don't have to worry about that. You just have to worry about going deep. You just go deep and he'll do the length in the breadth and the width of it.

And so, um, yeah. That's beautiful friend.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Thank you, friends. Yeah. And we'll see, Miss Michelle, let's hear yours, dear. What do you got for us in the whole world right now.

Michelle Benzinger: So, um, mine just came out of the blue. I was thinking of praying about it. Like I said, I was pretty darn. Um, committed to Lorian and I just didn't want to move off of that, but the Lord is always doing something new.

He is constant and consistent, but he's always doing something new, that little sneaky Jesus. So, um, my year is I actually in August. 50 this year, which I didn't even know until I was looking at my passport. Like that tells you a lot about me. I was like I'm not, I'll be 49. You know, husband's like, no baby, like, oh, okay, whatever.

I will be 50 this year. And the Lord just really stood out to me. Like this is a significant year and Lorian, like, it just makes me cry. This past year was probably one of most powerful year spiritually of my whole entire life. Like healing wise, um, to spiritually wise that what the Lord does ,me taking time back stepping back from a lot of exterior commitments, allowed deep interior work in myself and in my heartsand within my family.

And so there's a lot of revelation I've even gone back and started taking classes in different elements of healing and spiritual formation, which I have no idea what the Lord is gonna use that for. So I was really feeling like, okay, I didn't like, even though the calendar is a year is up, I don't want to come out of the season. I don't feel like this is just a strictly, like, okay, you just took your little year of rest and you know, your fallow year and then, get back up on the hamster wheel. I'm like, I cannot go back to what was before, I am forever changed. So I can not go back to what was before living how I was before.

So how do I live in new way? And so my word of the year is Jubilee. which means 50, which I see, like when I'm telling you the words of the year, build upon one another. On my silent retreat two years ago, I read the document that John Paul II wrote after the Jubilee year and it was profound for me reading that document.

There was something about it, him preparing and he says the Jubilee year is a year for, it is like a wedding feast. And like, I like underlined that and that stood out to me and he talks about how it's a threshold. It is something beginning. So when I mentioned it before, when I was in Washington DC for the Given conferences past a year, when I went to the shrine of John Paul II. something forever changed to me, my visit there, like, I really will feel like that was one of those moments that something changed and our good friend, Father John Burns. And I have talked about that a couple of times that something significant happened in that season for, um, just being with at shrine, you know, but what I realized as I went back after I chose this word, I went back is I took three pictures of the Jubilee doors.

And I was mesmerized by the Jubilee doors. I was mesmerized by line where it says his whole pontificate was to prepare the church for the great Jubilee and bring it into the third millennium. And there was something about just John Paul II and all of this, but then I went and so I told a good friend of ours that, okay, I chose my word of the year.

She said, can you tell me, like, last time I wouldn't tell her until we recorded. And so I was like, fine, I will tell you this year. So then I told her my word of the year and she goes, well, that makes so much sense. 'cause she said when the, um, the year 49 in biblical terms, the year that would lie fallow, the next year will be 50 is Jubilee and it's another season of rest and restoration. come on. So I called my Jewish friend and she just broke Leviticus 25 open for me, like in new ways, what it means, it means restoring the ancient ruins. It means rebuilding the things. It means slaves being free. It means all this kind of stuff. And of course that I would still continue in the season of restoration the season of rest, because that's what a Jubilee year is, but the Lord is restoring.

And then I went to go get something else. And a friend of mine that lives in Fairhope on the Mobile bay, she said, oh, this weather's crazy, but don't worry. We're going to have a couple of Jubilee, uh, on the bay. I'm like, what? Excuse me. She's like, have you ever been to a Jubilee on mobile bay? It's when all the fish come up.

And I'm like, Lord, you just can't make this crap up like that. Lord, You are doing it, but it was so interesting, like Heather, it was so interesting what you were saying. So I've gone back over Leviticus 25 and I've gone back, This is a year of restoration, Isaiah 61. And for me, it's like such a year of the Lord, really bringing pieces together. Like really a year of integration and myself together and just how he's done this in such a faithful and kind way. And it makes me cry because I feel like I always felt like, in some areas just like a late bloomer and in others, I was always so tiny for my age. You know, like I didn't break a hundred pounds of people that like, whatever, until I was like a junior in high school.

Like, um, yeah, I could not ever gain weight, not that problem now, but, um, I just like a late bloomer. Like I w because I was little, my birthday ran late in August. I was held back a year, you know, I always felt like, okay, I'm always like a step behind in some ways. But the Lord is like, my timing is perfect and I'm bringing all this restoration, all these little pieces and integration, and I just see how he's taken to different pieces.

And one of the, um, last things, and there's just so much, and I'll probably be unpacking this word throughout the podcast, you know, because really, feeling like this is a restoration, but one of the, probably one of the most powerful counseling sessions I had this past year was, my mentor said to me, she said, Michelle, have you ever heard the word transitional character?

And I said, no, what is a transitional character? And she said, a transitional character is one who in a single generation changes the entire course of a lineage. The change might be for good or for ill, but the most noteworthy examples are those

individuals who grew up in, in somewhat abusive, emotionally destructive environments, and somehow found a way to metabolize the poison or refuse to pass it onto the children.

They broke the mold. They refute the observation that hurt people, hurt people. And so they change their, the lineage of their family. They are the ones that restore the ancient ruins and say, these cycles will end with us. The cycles of destruction. These chains will end with us and that going forth will be generations of blessing.

And it was so profound for me. And the Lord was saying, this is that year. You know, you will, you know enough that things will be perfect. I know on the side of heaven they will not, but I also be like that. It is a word that is given to me, but it says, declare a Jubilee year or like sound the trumpet. Here we go. In Isaiah 61, Isaiah 58.

They both say it. So I feel like I'm praying that for our listeners, it is a year of freedom for all of us in some way, shape or form that we are the women and men, but mostly women I know listen to this podcast that we break these generational chains, that we are transitional characters in our family and our communities and in our church and in our world.

And that we say it ends with us. And we move forth blessing, not in our own power, like Heather was saying with her word. It is that we decrease and he, increase in his power, but that we are these transitional characters. And so I'm calling for a Jubilee year for all of us. I'll be like Oprah, you get a jubilee year everybody gets a Jubilee year.

Heather Khym: let's go! Look under your seat! It's a Jubilee I love it. Oh, awesome.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, friend. It's so beautiful. To see all of that fit together over these years of watching your years unfold and then watching the story of your life and then what the Lord has invited you to, and then you're in your yes, to that invitation and just the continual growth there in which is now providing a place for this to happen.

I mean, I bet like four years ago, you wouldn't have been able to even imagine something. No, it's just the beauty of, I love that. I love what you said with such a tender heart, that the Lord's timing is perfect. And then there's a time for all things. And this is that time. And so you can just feel the power and the weight of that, as you even share that of what the Lord is doing in your heart and just the restoration of your life and your marriage and your family.

All the people that, uh, you get to be with that you could just share life with. So, oh, that's beautiful. Thank you. And I'm thinking for them declaration over all of us. That's so lovely.

Heather Khym: I always love listening, Michelle, how the Lord speaks to you because it just, it always makes me laugh. I'm like, it's only for Michelle, just so obvious, but it's a good reminder to me, always, like it always increases my faith to hear how the Lord speaks and, and moves in your life. So I appreciate you sharing that and I can't wait. Can't wait. It's a good year. I mean, I think, I think we're all of us just have to come to grips with the fact, if nothing else, the last few years has taught us, like bad things are going to keep happening.

That's just reality. You know, it's just a part of life. But to be able to lift our eyes. This has been the continual call, I think, for all of us, like above those things, like those things aren't, they don't have to define us. They can, you know, but they don't have to, we can make different decisions. We can, you know, lift our eyes to be fixed on kingdom things and what God is doing and, and what a better time to do it than at the beginning of a new year. Yeah.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Amen. Amen. So we would invite you friends that in your small groups are on our Facebook page, that you would share your words for the year, if that feels safe and for free to do that. And if you, if you journey with a group of women or men and women in your life that, you know, each other's words too, cause that's really important to remember to write down each other's words and maybe a few things that as a person shares, what's really important to them.

So then we can sing the song to each other and we can remind each other throughout the year of what the Lord is doing and call each other, um, forward on the journey of his restoration. We would love to invite you to do that. And I'm sure Heather will start a beautiful post on Facebook people can share, which is so wonderful.

You always do such a good job of that Heather

Heather Khym: yeah. If anybody wants to join our private Facebook group, we just have kind of online discussions happening in there. So feel free to join us, but we have a very special announcement before we jump into our one things.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, well, I am very, the two of you were very kind. So if you've never listened to our show, before we do a series, every lent, we usually read a book or something like that. And so I've written a new book with Ave Maria press called Restore, and it's a guided lent journal and it's going to go through the

season of Lent through the traditional disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, but through the lens of healing of how fasting heals our relationship with ourself prayer heals our relationship with God and alms giving heals our relationships with others. So there's daily meditation, there's journaling, there's small groups, there's all kinds of stuff. There's a weekly video that goes with it. And we've decided very kindly to choose that as our Lenten book study. So I'm very, thank you.

Heather Khym: I'm so excited, Sister. I think. They're going to be so beautiful to sit at your feet. I'm really, really looking forward to that.

Michelle Benzinger: Me too. Me too. It will be beautiful. I mean, so you all will get the devotional. Um, if you purchased it , but then the videos, plus we'll be going through the podcast. So man, you, we are going to have a riches of resources,

Heather Khym: people can, pre-order it on Ave Maria press website and all the info about that will be in the show notes on our website. And if you're Canadian, you can pre-order it on Amazon. If you can't find it at a local bookstore

Michelle Benzinger: and we will have all those links for you in the show notes

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So Heather Khym. Would you like to share your first one thing of 2022 with our listeners?

Heather Khym: Sure. My first one thing, there's going to be lots of music. Cause there's been lots of music coming out this year that's been really good. So Bethel has an album that came out a while ago called Peace and they have a second part. So Peace when it came out has just been, I mean, it's been on a lot in my house. I love the big conference type live, you know, worship stuff, but there's, there's often and I'm just longing for something a bit quieter, a bit more reserved. And that album just was so good because it was just these kind of pared down, um, stripped down versions of songs. So they did a second version of it and specifically Graves into Gardens on that album is so, so, so good. So anyway, Bethel Peace vol ii, it's called. So you can check it out.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So my one thing for the year, I just wanted to, just to send a heartfelt thanks to all of you who have written me so many lovely Christmas cards and letters. I have so many when I got home, I was gone a lot during advent and Christmas, and they just had a stack of cards and how people found the address from our website, from our SOLT website. And I just want you to know that there's absolutely no way I could respond to all of you, but I want you to know that I read every single one of your letters and your Christmas cards and your pictures and all you share. And it's just, it touches me so deeply. And I just offer you to Jesus. So

I just want to say profoundly, thank you. If you don't hear back from me, it's not that I don't care. I care more than you could possibly know. I'm just not able to respond to everybody, but I just was just overwhelmed by the kindness of people. And I just wanted to say thank you. And just to let you know that I'm praying for you. Oh, so y'all are my one thing. I'm very grateful

Michelle Benzinger: So my one thing is in perfect Michelle, I have three, one things. This thing I got lots of, one thing is the new addition of the word of fire, they had volume one And now the word on fire from Bishop Barron and all of them have volume II acts of the apostles and other letters in, and it is stunning. When I got it this past week, I opened it up and one, they have this gorgeous artwork about Mary at Pentecost that I love. And Chris was so funny. He was looking at it and goes, yeah, I like it. But you would like it more because it's really artsy. It is stunning. It is beautiful. It looks very artistic, but the Bible itself. I was just blown away with it, the artwork that they haven't and the reflections, and I loved the first version, but I think I have to say, I think the second version, I love it even more. I mean, I love the whole, all scripture. I can't pick, but there's just something, even the artwork they pick this last time and I just have to commend the word on fire. Thank you for doing stuff with such beauty and truth and goodness and such quality. The paper quality is beautiful. The outside the gold, you know what I mean? I could go on and on, but it is lovely. And I will post the link here for pictures. Another one is a Catholic podcast that I came upon us that she actually a listener of ours called Born of Wonder Podcast. And I just love her whole perspective of the world. She is very literary. She loves Tolkein and she loves Narnia, but she loves the writers. You know, everything from Sylvia Plath to Flannery O'Connor to Joan Didion and just some really beautiful things, but I love the way she writes and I love her perspective. She, especially one on star gazing that I absolutely loved because that's become a new hobby of mine and I got a telescope for Christmas. And so it just super, super cool. And then my last is a song from Maverick City music that was on the Christmas album that I have been blaring at my house and it's Revelations 19. And I mean, it is some church. Like, I love it. I mean, I can listen to it and it just. I mean, it helps you get your praise on. Let's put it that way. And so there's just something beautiful about it. And the lead singer, there like, y'all the church needs that woman's voice. Like there is just a power in it pointing that woman's voice. So I just love it. So I will post all those links in our show notes. Yay.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, here we go, ladies. This is a lovely start. This is a lovely start to season 11 to 2022. And the new journey as, Aslan says to Lucy, things never happen the same way twice. Right? So here we go, uh, on a new year and. Yeah. And a new journey with Christ. So dear friends, thank you so much for joining us, please. Once again, subscribe to our emails, come jump on our private Facebook group. Just be part of our family. We want to be with you. We want to

hear from you. We want to journey with you. So please do that. And until next week we will be Abiding Together, God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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