INTRODUCTION
“If not for the women…”

Women have been telling the good news since antiquity. The first evangelist of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was a woman; Mary Magdalene learns that Jesus has risen from the grave and she runs and tells the disciples, many of whom doubt her account. Women have been the purveyors of truth for centuries: Deborah, the judge in the Book of Judges; Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman; Jarena Lee, Ida B. Wells; Sarah Mapps Douglass; Fannie Lou Hamer; and countless others have awakened us to the ongoing pursuit for freedom, justice, and liberty for God’s people.

In recent months, we have found the need to be more in tune with the voices of women in the world; social movements led by women (Black Lives Matter, Black Girl Magic, Women’s March on Washington, etc.) have awakened us to the social ills of our time. Like the wailing women in Jeremiah 9, the voices of women have been a clarion call to the nations that have moved us to action. In this season of Underground, we get to experience the multiple dimensions of black womanhood – from Rosalee’s newfound maturity and responsibility to Ernestine’s wrestling with her own identity, power, and privilege, the women lead the way as we explore what it means to wrestle with our future and our past, the promise of freedom and the realities of bondage, and the hope for a new life in the face of doubt.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to be interactive and works in either small or large group settings. Discussion questions will not only provoke conversation and deep thought, but also call for you to situate yourself in the lives of the characters; you may designate one person to lead the discussion (in a large group) or break down into smaller groups for more intimate conversation. Our hope is that you will fully engage in watching this season, knowing that the stories of the characters are the stories of our lives. As they fight for freedom, so do we, knowing that God has a plan to deliver us from physical, mental, and spiritual bondage.
HERE ARE SOME FUN FEATURES OF THE GUIDE

- **Episode Themes**: We’ve highlighted the major themes of each episode to help pastors, preachers, and ministry leaders develop sermonic responses to the issues raised within each episode of *Underground*. This quick thematic reference is a sure-fire way to incorporate the entire church community into the exploration of the faith presence within *Underground*.

- **“That’ll Preach”**: Quick one-liners from the show that you can share in 140 characters or less. You see them throughout the study guide – tweet them live during the show or as a part of your small group study as online conversation starters.

- **Words That Matter**: Every session will feature key words and themes that frame the conversation and viewing of that week’s episode.

- **Let’s Talk About It**: Centered around the show’s plotline, these questions facilitate open conversation within your small/large group for ongoing, deeper discussion.

- **The Tough Question**: Every session will feature one “tough” theological question. This question may center on the presence of God or how we view women’s bodies, shame, and objectification. Ruminations over this question can happen in your personal devotional time or with a trusted faith sojourner.

- **Dig Into the Word**: A list of scriptures you can use to further your own personal study time.
EPISODE 1 | “CONTRABAND”

**Episode Themes:** Women's leadership, mentorship, disruption, community identity, legacy

We meet the brazen Harriet Tubman, leader of the Underground Railroad, in the opening episode of *Underground*. Affectionately (and most appropriately) known as Moses, Harriet’s leadership and mentorship toward Rosalee reminds us of the biblical story of the man whose name she evokes. In the Bible, Moses and Joshua’s relationship was one of mutual respect and shared responsibility; Joshua, who started as Moses’ servant and attendant, would soon glean from his mentor the skills, intuition, and experience needed to lead the people of Israel to the Promised Land.

In the opening scenes of *Underground*, we see a similar relationship: a bright-eyed Rosalee following the guidance of her mentor, Harriet Tubman. Harriet is sure, steady, and unafraid of the dangers before her – and Rosalee absorbs her courage. Harriet’s ability to negotiate with slave catchers is legendary and reflective of the kind of historical expression of black women across the diaspora. Always daring, quick thinking, and fiercely committed to protecting the lives of others, Rosalee learns the importance of mentorship and sacrifice for the greater good.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- Consider your relationships over the years. Have you ever experienced the kind of mentor/mentee relationship that Harriet and Rosalee have? What was the one thing that you learned from (or taught) someone else? What kind of larger impact did it have on the world around you?

- Harriet’s brazen efforts against the slave catcher raises questions about risk. As believers, we are called to risk something for the greater good. That may be our position or privilege, money, possessions, or social status. In the story of the rich young man (Matthew 19:16-22), we learn of a young man who was not willing to risk what he had to follow Jesus. Harriet risked her life and Rosalee’s for the liberation
of others. What are you willing to risk for the liberation of others? What are you willing to let go so you may “pick up your cross and follow Christ”?

WORDS THAT MATTER

**Disruption:** *transitive. verb* disrupt \
To interrupt the normal course or unity of.

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“Seeing the problem isn’t enough. The system isn’t going anywhere. We have to figure out a way to disrupt it.” – Elizabeth Hawkes

We see several acts of disruption throughout this week’s episode: Elizabeth Hawkes is inspired by Georgia’s words to “disrupt the status quo. Rosalee disrupts the execution of Noah. Disruption has been a key ingredient to the unsettling of injustice in America; protests by social activist groups have been instrumental in “waking up” those who have been blissfully unaware of how racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other social ills have wreaked havoc within our communities. Historically, the black church has been a key figure in the disruption and dismantling of injustices in the world - a role that has been the responsibility of believers around the world since the time of the early church. Just like God disrupts our lives to make us aware of the spiritual happenings around us, we are called to disrupt injustices so that liberation can thrive within our world.
LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

• In Amos 7, we learn about Amos, a sheepherder whose life is disrupted to become a prophet in Israel. This follows a pattern with God – we are living our lives and suddenly God disrupts our lives and calls us to do something we never imagined. Has this happened to you? How has God disrupted your life to get you on another, unexpected path?

• Like Elizabeth, we are often unexpectedly challenged. How do we remain open to God doing something unexpected in our lives?

THAT’LL PREACH!

“But just because you’ve survived, don’t make you strong.”

– the ghost of Pearly Mae

THE TOUGH QUESTION

There is an absence of women’s stories in the Bible that highlight mutuality, leadership, and agency around bodies, social positioning, etc. What does the absence of women’s leadership narratives in the biblical text say about our modern interpretation and acceptance of women in church leadership?

DIG INTO THE WORD

EPISODE 2 | “THINGS UNSAID”

Episode Themes: Vision, shame/shaming, guilt, intergenerational female relationships, wisdom, hope, grief, life, death, generational trauma

Shock. Grief. Trauma. Shame. Guilt. Pride: All find and grab hold of us as we watch women like Elizabeth work through the grief of losing her husband. Pride and ego pushes slave catcher Patty to pursue her “Black Rose” to great lengths because to be defeated by a cunning slave like Harriet leaves a bad taste in her mouth. Shame forces a young Clara to make difficult decisions about her body without the nurturing support of her community. Mothering guilt causes Ernestine to try to help Clara choose her unborn child because of her own parenting decisions.

Clara, a young slave girl on the Roe plantation, is faced with the difficult choice of whether to carry her baby to term, fearing that revealing she is pregnant will bring shame to her family. This deeply personal choice for women mirrors today’s ongoing social and theological conversation about single-parent homes within urban communities. Because over 50 percent of minority households are led by single parents, and many black congregations tout over 60 percent female congregants, many of the women within our congregations are single parents. While our Christian faith calls for the acceptance and inclusion of all people, we often find that shame permeates the inner workings of our congregations, leaving many women, especially single mothers, left out of the progression of and leadership within the church.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

- The care for marginalized groups within our church is more than being attuned to race, ethnicity, and social class; it’s about social status and family dynamics too. How does your church care for and respond to the needs of single mothers? Where are there opportunities for increased awareness and enrichment programming for single mothers and their children?

- Psalm 68:6 reminds us that God is severely interested in caring for the widowed and the fatherless. In what ways do those in Clara’s community accomplish this goal? How do they miss the mark?
WORDS THAT MATTER

Shame vs. Guilt: Author Brené Brown defines “shame” and “guilt” in this way: “Shame is a focus on self, guilt is a focus on behavior. Shame is, ‘I am bad.’ Guilt is, ‘I did something bad.’

Intergenerational: adjective in·ter·gen·er·a·tional inˈtər-jenˈə-rə-nəl Relating to, involving, or affecting several generations.

THAT’LL PREACH!

“And what everybody gone say they find out?
The shaming of me. And my father.” – Clara

THAT’LL PREACH!

“That’s how they be. Talk bad ’bout you, then help.” – Clara

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

• Using Brené Brown’s definition of shame and guilt, discuss a time you felt guilty about something. Did your act cause you to see yourself differently? How so?

*I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.* – Psalm 139:14

• In your small or large groups, name how you are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Call them out popcorn style; watch how the atmosphere changes within the space. To be reminded that, even when we are guilty of something (sin), it does not change who God made us (heart).

• Harriet and Rosalee’s relationship delves deeper as Harriet sends her on a run on the Underground Railroad by herself. Their exchange as Rosalee prepares for her journey reflects the importance of intergenerational relationships. Harriet’s vision and wisdom help Rosalee see what she could not see before: that she is called for this mission. With Harriet’s wisdom and Rosalee’s youthfulness, they are able to overcome insurmountable challenges.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

• The church is a great place for us to practice what it means to be in intergenerational relationships; how have the relationships between people of different generations furthered the important work of spreading the news of Jesus Christ within this community?

• What do members of this church community have to learn from one another? What do members of each generation bring to the table to make God’s purpose in the earth realized?

THAT’LL PREACH!

“They always say, ‘the promise of freedom.’ Maybe that’s all it is. A promise ain’t ever gonna be kept.” – Elijah
THE TOUGH QUESTION
In a world not experiencing justice for growing incidents of police violence, whose job is it to extract justice on behalf of the oppressed in our judicial system or God? When the judicial system fails the community, how do we situate God into the equation for justice and equality?

DIG INTO THE WORD
1 Timothy 5:3-16, Psalm 32:5, Psalm 68:6, Psalm 139:14, John 8:36

EPISODE 3 | “ACHE”

Episode themes: Daughter/father relationships, loss/questioning of faith, shame, diversity of women’s voices, motherhood, gender roles/stereotypes, respectability politics, domestic violence, resistance, generational curses

Last week we explored the difference between shame and guilt and the theme comes up again in this week’s episode of Underground. Table, Tapper, Clara’s father, turns what should be guilt (for an action) into shame (personal esteem): “But you are being shamed because you should feel shame. What you done, it’s done disgraced us all.” The dangerous “theology” of shame is that it situates people into low self-esteem, depression, and harmful behaviors and is
antithetical to how God calls for us as individuals and a collective to address our sins. Because God is faithful and just to forgive us (1 John 1:9), we do not have to (or allow others to) question who God made us to be. While our actions may be displeasing, who God made us is never shameful, never worth belittling, and always rooted in the love of Christ.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- Overcoming shame and guilt can be a daunting task. Our personal shame and guilt can cause us to treat those closest to us with disdain. How can we remember God’s grace and forgiveness toward us when we’re tempted to shame others for their shortcomings?

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“I’m out here tryin’ to protect myself. The only one tryin’. So I’mma use what I got.” – Ernestine

Rosalee loses her hearing after a gun goes off too close to her ear. She finds it difficult to be fully alert and aware of her surroundings as she’s been chased by Patty and her gang. We too find it difficult to navigate life when our spiritual ears aren’t working. When the Holy Spirit is looking to give us signs or signals that danger is near, we can miss it if we have not been tuning in to the Spirit through prayer and spiritual growth.

- Has there ever been a time where you “missed God” because you weren’t “listening?” What was the outcome?

- How do we go about keeping our ears sharp to what God is saying? What practical tools can you offer your small/large group that will help with our spiritual hearing?

**WORDS THAT MATTER**

*Resist: verb re·sist \ri-ˈzist\*

To exert oneself so as to counteract or defeat; to withstand the force or effect of

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“The promise of freedom if you just work hard enough. My brother believed in that. That’s how they get you.” – Rosalee
THAT’LL PREACH!
“I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well. And ain’t I a woman?” – Sojourner Truth

THE TOUGH QUESTION
In light of recent events in our world, true freedom seems to be only for a select group of people. How do we take hold of our freedom in the world and in God when systems of oppression make it difficult to do so?

DIG INTO THE WORD

EPISODE 4 | “NOK AUUT”

“It’s women and children who are affected most when men wage wars.” Elizabeth is keenly aware of the layered destruction that slavery has
on entire communities; too often we are blind to how the “least of these” are impacted by political and religious policies, leaving vulnerable people to carry the weight of the destruction of self-serving policies. Elizabeth and Lucas are talking through who will be most impacted by the threat of war, those who are already in bondage or those who enslave those in bondage. This tension between the two raises an important question about the role/need for war to enact justice.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- There are countless biblical references of God calling for governmental, political, and religious communities to be mindful of the vulnerable within their reach. Take a moment to read Matthew 3:7-12 and identify the groups of people John the Baptist holds accountable. Where do we see that need for accountability in today’s society?

- If God is responsible for our deliverance, what role does war/violence play in the liberation of the oppressed? Do they work together to achieve liberation or independence from each other?

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“As black men, we ain’t afforded anything shy of hardness.” – Cato

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“Nothin’ fair about this fight. Nothin’ fair about the whole damn world.” – Noah

**WORDS THAT MATTER**

*Rage:* **noun** \rāj\  
Violent and uncontrolled anger

Elizabeth uses Scripture to appeal to the hearts, minds, and souls of a crowd listening about the abolishment of slavery. Her appeal, moving and charged with action, reflects the spirit of God as it calls for all who are listening to act on the behalf of others. It calls for those with power, privilege, and resources to do what they can for the cause - and failure (or refusal to do so) makes them complicit in the evils of slavery.
THAT’LL PREACH!
“Inaction is nothing but slow death.” – Elizabeth

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu is known for saying, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” We are often witness to different injustices but, for one reason or another, can be afraid to speak up for the oppressed. Think of a time when you overlooked an opportunity to speak up for someone but didn’t. What do you think you could have done differently? How does God call for us to speak up for others in Scripture?

THAT’LL PREACH!
“Those who make peace impossible, make violence inevitable!” – Elizabeth

THE TOUGH QUESTION
What are you willing to give up for the liberation of others?

DIG INTO THE WORD

EPISODE 5 | “WHITEFACE”

Episode themes: Racial identity, community, power, journey to freedom, “American dream,” knowledge
We’ve followed Daniel’s story from the beginning of the season, learning a little bit more about him every week. His newfound ability to read, he says, is a “curse” as it has opened up a world of information to him that he never wanted to know. As the old adage goes, “ignorance is bliss,” and as believers, we often find that God “keeps us in the dark” so we can walk by faith. But this is not to make our journey more difficult – it is so we can learn to trust God and develop our character and heart toward Him and others.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- Daniel says, “All the words just gave voice to things inside I couldn’t tell nobody.” Have you ever felt like you didn’t have the words to articulate what you were thinking/feeling? How can we rely on our knowledge (intellectual and spiritual) as a means for God to reveal His plans for us? (Jeremiah 29:11)

- Trusting God is like walking blindfolded. What real-life challenges come with having blind trust in God? In what ways are we rewarded when we successfully follow God?

- What do you think Daniel stands to gain by using his newfound ability to read, even though he’s been exposed to some not-so-pleasant truths?

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“It’s always been a cruel world, but it gets even crueler…” – Daniel

Wrestling with one’s identity – whether that’s racial, ethnic, or social – can wreak havoc on the psyche. Georgia’s admittance to her true racial identity and Cato’s wrestling with his new identity as a free man both reveal the ways our pasts can shape the way we navigate the world. Scripture reminds us that we were made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26-27), our true identity is in God. But when our family history or personal journey challenges that, we find ourselves telling bigger lies that are hard to maintain.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- At the beginning of the episode, Cato’s friends perform in “whiteface,” a counter to the racially insensitive “art” of “blackface,” when white
performers painted their faces black to poke fun at African Americans. This switch in identity brought about anger from the theater patrons but reveals three bigger questions:

1. Who do you say you are?
2. Who does God say you are?
3. Who does your community think you are?

- Are your answers congruent? Where are they different? How does exploring what you, God, and your community say about you further your understanding of personal identity?
- 1 Peter 2:9 says that we are of a “royal priesthood” and “God’s special possession.” We know this to be true even during times of difficulty. How do you claim your “royal priesthood” in the presence of trouble? What words of affirmation do you speak over yourself and to others?

THAT’LL PREACH!
“What I learned on my journey to freedom is there is nothing in your past that cannot be forged into a weapon.” – Cato

THAT’LL PREACH!
“We just retellin’ the story they wrote for us.” – Ernestine

WORDS THAT MATTER

Identity: noun  iden·ti·ty \ɪ-dən-ˈta-tē, ə-, -ˈde-nə-\ The distinguishing character or personality of an individual

Community: noun  com·mu·ni·ty \kə-ˈmyū-nə-tē\ The people with common interests living in a particular area; common character

THE TOUGH QUESTION
How do we keep our identities grounded in God when it feels like God is absent from our lives?

DIG INTO THE WORD
Genesis 1:26-27, 1 Peter 2:9, Isaiah 43:18-19, Jeremiah 29:11
Harriet Tubman’s story takes front stage and we are entrenched in the historical narrative behind how she became “Moses” of the Underground Railroad. Her call to liberate slaves began when she was a girl; recalling how she had always been mischievous and rebellious, she “grew up like a neglected weed, ignorant of liberty…” and it wasn’t until she was free that she understood
the ugliness of slavery.

The power of Harriet’s story is that the threads of her life as a child and young adult was critical to her living out the call on her life; she reveled in having personal trials that only equipped her to lead people to freedom. She embraced the characteristics that some may say were “unfit” for a young woman to have – she allowed God to use everything about her life, good and bad, for His glory.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

- We are often taught that who we are, especially the “bad” parts, have to be “cleaned up” before God can use us. Harriet’s life is a testament that God can and will use every part of our lives for His glory. What parts of your life have you hidden away because you thought God couldn’t use them? How can you begin to shine light on those “dark” places so that God may get the glory out of them, too?

- “What is your purpose?” This loaded question takes some people a lifetime to figure out, but conversations with other believers can help us ascertain what we think our purpose may be. Take a few minutes and talk through this statement with a partner: “I think my purpose in life is to…” Listen intently to what you say and how God moves in your heart.

THAT’LL PREACH!

“Ain’t nothin’ can’t be endured when you got a purpose.” – Harriet Tubman

Our pursuit of heaven is a primary focus of our faith; Jesus has promised that if we believe in Him that we have access to eternal life with God. The Lord’s Prayer affirms our belief that the glory in heaven is accessible on earth (Matthew 6:10), but Harriet’s account of life as a slave is compared to “hell on earth.” Sin, sickness, violence, poverty, injustices – all are things that make living on earth feel like “hell” for many. Harriet’s desire for the abolitionists to understand what “hell on earth” is like for slaves is married to her commitment to liberating others from that undesirable state.
THAT’LL PREACH!
“Violence with no cause is brutality. But to beat back those tryin’ to kill you, that’s hope.” – Harriet Tubman

WORDS THAT MATTER
Risk: noun ˈrisk\nPossibility of loss or injury

Contented: adjective con·tent·ed ˈkon-ˈtend\nTo strive or vie in rivalry or against difficulties satisfied or showing satisfaction

THE TOUGH QUESTION
How do we find contend in the midst of pain and suffering? Where is God when His people suffer?

DIG INTO THE WORD
Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 4:12-13, Matthew 6:10

S2, E7 | “28”

Episode themes: Risk/Reward, waiting/patience, coming home, revenge, regret, forgiveness, interpersonal relationships
Our relationships with others are often the best way to discern our spiritual growth; when someone has wronged us or we feel that we’ve been mistreated in some way, our true spiritual maturity is sure to show. This is especially true when there’s an opportunity for revenge, to get back at someone who has wronged us. A quick search on the topic of revenge in the Bible reveals countless scriptures of how God does not want us to exact revenge on others – and the often deadly cost of revenge. Clara’s newfound position in the Master’s house has fueled her need for revenge against Hicks and Ernestine – and as we learn, it’s because of her own unresolved hurt of the shame she experienced in week two.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- Unresolved hurt can drive us to do things that may be out of character. Talk about a time when you wanted to exact revenge on someone but didn’t go through with it. What was your motivation for not seeking revenge? How did God eventually work that situation out for your good?
- Much of Clara’s hurt was from the public shaming she experienced from her father and leaders of the community. How can we better resolve “moral issues” within our community so that people are left whole and restored in Jesus?

Rosalee and Noah return to the Macon Plantation to bring Rosalee’s family to freedom. As they wait for Corra to return from the Master’s house, Rosalee reflects on what it means to wait: “And with all the waitin’ comes the worryin.” Rosalee understands what it means to wait – on God, freedom, or the next encounter with danger.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- Waiting on God to move is probably the hardest part of our lives as believers. Psalm 37 reminds us to “Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for Him to act.” Where in your life do you need to “wait patiently for God to act?” Meditate on this area and ask God for the strength to “be still” and have confidence in Him.

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

_This is your grandfather’s land, but it ain’t never been home._ – Rosalee
THE TOUGH QUESTION
When we are in trouble, it can sometimes seem like it takes God forever to deliver us. What is it that we believe we learn about God and ourselves as we wait for God to come to our rescue?

DIG INTO THE WORD

EPISODE 8 | “WHITE CHRISTMAS”
Episode themes: Betrayal, power, apathy/apathetic attitudes, regret, giving

Women have taken the lead in the fight for freedom throughout this season of Underground and use their tactics and female wits to acquire the resources and relationships necessary to secure freedom for themselves and others. What is often common for those who are in the pursuit of justice are the encounters with apathetic people. Elizabeth and Georgia’s fight to raise
money is met with apathetic Laney Briss who, more than capable of helping the women raise money for abolition, refuses because of her own prejudices.

We see this in the church, too. Many of us who are equipped (read: blessed) to help others often take an apathetic approach to siding for justice. Our blessings become something we hoard instead of sharing with the world – a counterintuitive response to how God calls for His people to share what God has given us.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- The laws of giving are clear: When we give, God will give back to us. Scriptures from Genesis through the Gospels remind us that giving is a part of our lives as believers. Why was Laney Briss’ response the wrong response? Where do we see this kind of apathy toward giving in our own church/communities?

- Read the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-8. Think about it: Which type of “ground” are you? Are you rocky ground that produces nothing from which it is given, thorny ground that chokes the life out of what you’re given, or rich, fertile ground that yields a harvest?

- We are the hands and feet of Christ; how does the world experience Christ through your giving? How was Elizabeth and Georgia’s efforts to end slavery an extension of God’s hands and feet?

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“I’m tired of begging even good people to join the fight.” – Elizabeth

There are clear parallels between the biblical narrative of Moses and James: Two young boys who were taken in by the “Master” (in Moses’ case, Pharaoh’s daughter) and raised as one of the royal children. James has fully adopted his new life as a member of the slaveholding household, just like Moses. While James does not take the same liberative approach as Moses, we see a shift in James’ understanding of why allegiance to his people is essential to the liberation of all people.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- A change in our position and privilege can shift the allegiances we have
to those who have been in community with us over the years. Why is it important to remain rooted to the causes and needs of the marginalized despite our change in social status?

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“The Lord is on our side. But we have to do our part.” – Harriet Tubman

“Ain’t nothing wrong with a little sin for the greater good.” – Harriet Tubman

**THE TOUGH QUESTION**

The women in this week’s episode were faced with some difficult moral choices. After attempting to steal the church’s offering money, Harriet says, “Ain’t nothing wrong with a little sin for the greater good.” Is this true? Is there ever a time where committing a “sin” is worth it if it helps the greater good?

**DIG INTO THE WORD**


**EPISODE 9 | “TBD”**

**Episode themes:** Unresolved pain, revenge, responsibility/accountability, forgiveness, self doubt, belief in the impossible
The women in this episode push every character (and themselves) to their limits: Harriet challenges Noah to believe the impossible; when he questioned his ability as a man, father, or even tradesman, Harriet’s faith reminds Noah that faith is the substance of things hoped for – even freedom from slavery. “Ain’t nothin’ great ever happened based on sense or fear. You got to be desperate or insane. You got to believe…”

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- Our faith in God is rooted in very “unbelievable” things: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus requires big faith. To know that Jesus left earth and is at the right hand of the Throne requires us to believe the “impossible.” What are some “impossible” moments in your life that God has shown himself strong? Where you healed from a disease? Did you receive an unexpected raise on your job? Testify to the people around you about how you believed the impossible!

- If faith is “the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen,” how do you manage having faith when you aren’t “seeing” the evidence of God in your life? What are some ways you can deepen your faith to wait on God when it looks like nothing is happening?

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“And that’s what you done lost. That feelin’ that impossible things be possible.” – Harriet Tubman

“...A sense of safety transforms the spirit...” – Georgia

“Where there is no vision the people perish.” – Proverbs 29:18  

Daniel, who lost his vision in episode eight, remains committed to securing freedom for his family. Though his physical eyes do not function, his spiritual eyes have 20/20 vision. His plan to gain his family’s freedom is led through his remaining senses and faith in God. Without a plan, surely Daniel and his family would find themselves back in bondage. But he utilizes the rest of his senses and his innate faith in God to try something, anything.
LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

• What ends up being the reality of our lives sometimes does not match the vision we had in mind. Name a time when you envisioned things going one way and, by divine disruption, things went another way? How did you respond?

• How critically important is it for believers to have a God-driven vision for their lives? What can be the shortfalls to not having a vision directed by God’s wisdom?

WORDS THAT MATTER

**Vision:** *noun* vi·sion \ˈvi-zhən\  
The act or power of imagination or mode of seeing or conceiving; unusual discernment or foresight.

DIG INTO THE WORD

Hebrews 11:1, Mark 9:23, Matthew 17:20, Proverbs 29:18

THE TOUGH QUESTION

It can be hard to believe that God is for us when we are faced with insurmountable difficulty. How do we find hope that God is on our side when the world seems to be against us?

EPISODE 10 | “SOLDIER”

*Episode themes: Overcoming adversity, dealing with your past, fear, honoring relationships, family, forgiveness, grace, redemption*
Our lives as believers are rooted in the notion that God offers us grace because of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross makes us recipients of a grace that overlooks our shortcomings and faults. Because of that, God expects us to offer grace to others.

**LET’S TALK ABOUT IT**

- Has there been a time when you had to extend grace to someone who didn’t “deserve” it? Maybe this was a coworker or family member who wronged you. Talk about a time you had to be forgiving to someone. What did you learn about yourself and God from the experience?

- When did you receive God’s unmerited grace? How did it change your life for the good?

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“You got to burn everything that’s useless. Burn yourself clean. Become one thing. And amplify that into the only thing.” – Cato

**WORDS THAT MATTER**

**Grace:** noun \ˈgrās\  
Unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration or sanctification

**Forgiveness:** noun for·give·ness \fər-ˈgiv-nəs, för-\  
The act of forgiving; allowing room for error or weakness

**THAT’LL PREACH!**

“You can break the physical chains, once you set yourself to it. It’s a lot harder to break the mental ones.” – Noah

We all have a driving force that motivates us to take risks. For some of us it’s our family. For others, it’s a particular way of life we desire. Whatever it may be, we know that our desires must be motivated by the liberation and greater good for others. When God empowers us to prosper, we must not take too much stock in what we’ve acquired – we must be as willing to risk it all for others to see the goodness of God as we are to hold on to what we have. It is this
ongoing process of acquisition and relinquishing that we see God’s hand in the lives of us all.

THAT’LL PREACH!
“Today I chose to fight my way back to my family.” – Noah

DIG INTO THE WORD
Revelations 12:11, Psalm 23:4, Matthew 18:15, Titus 2:11-14

THE TOUGHP QUESTION
If Jesus didn’t sacrifice His life for us, we would never experience His grace and forgiveness. Why does His sacrifice matter so much, not just for us, but for the world?

NOTES