



Simple, with Tsh Oxenreider

Episode 189

thesimpleshow.com

Segment One

Tsh: [00:02](#) This is Simple; I'm Tsh Oxenreider.

Hey friends! In this episode we've got another in our series called My Good List, a little something we do every now and then on both the blog and podcast. I ask a friend for four things they're into you right now that's making life a little sweeter. A thing, a habit, a work of art, and a philosophy. In this one, I'm talking to my good friend Emily P. Freeman. She's a fellow writer and podcaster. She's the voice behind one of my favorite shows, The Next Right Thing and she's got a book of the same name coming out today, actually, the day this episode goes live on April 2nd, 2019. I've already read it and given it my hearty endorsement. Get a copy of this one. It might be my favorite of hers yet. Emily's been on the show a few times. The last time was last summer after she and I co-lead Literary London and we debriefed about our experience. We loved it so much we're doing it again. In just a few months, Emily and I will be back across the pond leading six other women through this favorite corner of the world of mine. And then in the third segment of the show, as always, since it's a start of a new month, I'm talking with Haley Stewart about what's in store for us in the liturgical calendar for March. Let's get right into it. Here's Emily P. Freeman talking about her good list.

All right, Emily, my dear. We are doing my good list where you are sharing with us for things that are making every little part of your life a little bit better. The first thing we talk about is a thing. That's a literal thing, big or small. What do you have right now in your life that's making it better?

Emily: This is so dumb, Tsh. My thing. Are you ready?

Tsh: I'm so ready. I liked dumb things.

Emily: Okay, good. I have this recent, in the last six months, a thing for coffee mugs that are black and white. Now when I travel, if I see a mug that's black and white or black or white or usually they're white with like a black logo on them, I'm obsessed with them. And then in the morning I'm so happy. I'm staring right now at my shelf of all my black and white mugs.

Tsh: [02:08](#) Emily, I don't think we've ever talked about this before, but we only have white mugs in our house. That was the parameter Kyle and I sat many moons ago in all our travels. We won't buy a mug if it's any color other than white and they usually have black logos. I don't think this is dumb at all. A year ago, Kyle's sister gave him a black mug for Christmas and I was a bit like, what are you doing? What's going on? What do we do with this thing? I get it. Do you have a favorite?

Emily: Well, I have a couple favorites, honestly. Usually, and this makes sense. Most of my favorite ones come from actual coffee shops. They know how to choose the thick, white restaurant, grade mug. There's one I got in New York City that the logo is actually a face of a man, except the eyes are like glasses that are coffee mugs. So random.

Tsh: [03:04](#) I've been to that coffee shop.

Emily: Have you? The little logo looks like my nephew. As soon as I brought it home, my kids were like, oh that's Gavin. I can see that a little bit.

Tsh: I know what your kids are saying. I'm going to look this up because it's gonna drive me crazy and I'll put in a link. It's not All of Our Peoples is it? It's some brand up there.

Emily: It is and I can see it but it's faced the wrong way. But I can get up and get it.

Tsh: It's okay. I don't really need to know. Listeners are like, this is really dumb. I love that choice. I am right now drinking from the Black Dog coffee mug. It's a white mug with a black dog on it and it's from Martha's Vineyard and you're right, it's usually restaurants or coffee shops that do mugs best.

Emily: They've got the best ones.

Tsh: Yeah, good choice. Okay, so the first one was a mug. Number two, is a habit you've adopted. This can be anything. Habit usually sounds much bigger than it really often is, but it can be anything from like going to bed early or listening to podcasts on a long drive, whatever it is. What habit have you adopted recently that's making life better?

Emily: I will tell you one thing is I'm really sticking to my morning routine lately. It started just in the past couple of weeks actually, maybe around the beginning of Lent is actually when it started where I have a reading I do and then, thanks to Laura Tremaine who has influenced me to set a timer when I read books that I'm wanting to finish, I'll set a timer for 15 or 20 minutes and I'll read for that much time and it's amazing how much time, how much reading I can get done when I set a timer because I know the timer is going to go off in 20 minutes so I don't

get as distracted with picking up my phone or whatever because I'll have to push pause on the timer because I only want to time my reading time. These days have been really sort of full and busy with my schedule. It's been really fun to look forward to the morning when I'm going to have my coffee and do my timed reading. I've enjoyed that.

Tsh: The last good list we did here on the show was Christy Purifoy and she's just said something similar and she has adopted part of her morning routine reading a classic and does a timer as well. She either does a timer or sets a time in our head like I'm only going to read to x amount of time and I love this idea. To me, I can also see the flip side, I don't want to read it all because then it'll be two hours later and I've done nothing. You get sucked into a book. If I know I have a time limit and will not read forever, I might be more compelled to do that in the morning. This is brilliant. I really like it.

Emily: I do too. Yes, I think it's made a big difference.

Tsh: What else is part of your morning routine? I'm just thinking of listeners who are very curious about what you do to start your day.

Emily: Another thing I do every morning, and I've done this one for years, is I write in my one line a day journal that's a five year journal and you write the date in and you only have a few lines. It says one line, but it's actually a few lines. I write about the day before, so I don't do it at night. I do it in the morning because my brain is clearer then, reflecting on yesterday, so it's like a mini daily examen except I do it in the morning about the day before. I'll do that just to reflect and remember and it's so boring to anyone that's not me. I mean it's not full of beautiful words. It's just really our family. It's just keeping a document of what's going on in our family life and what these days are made up of.

Tsh: You know what? I do that journal too. I have the same one on my nightstand and I really like your idea of doing it in the morning because I will make up every excuse in the book not to do it at night because I'm too tired. My brain is mush at night. I have gone back and read some of the dumb stuff I've written down and it's usually like, I mean the whole point of this journal is to write down the mundane. I'm all for it. But if I do it at night it's usually what the weather was, what we had for dinner and I know I'm not really going to care about that. I would rather write about like the one thing that the kid did yesterday that made me smile. I think that's a good idea because my brain is better in the morning. I like that.

You have your morning routine as your habit. Your kids are, well there are about my kids age slash a little bit older so I'm just saying that for people listening who, because we usually get comments from people whenever we bring up

morning routines, like I wish I had a morning routine like that, but my kids are two and eight months old and I will remind them that it hasn't always been like this. I'm guessing your kids now can take care of themselves in the morning. Is that the deal?

Emily: Yes. That, I'm still doing stuff in the morning. It's not like I just take the morning off, but I'll wake up before them usually and really a morning routine, sometimes I'll set my timer to just read for five minutes if I know I don't have much time, so my morning routine is less than 30 minutes, but it used to be, I have three minutes right now and that can still count as a morning routine. Anything you do every morning can be a routine, right?

Tsh: It's more the idea of you're in control of your day instead of the day controlling you. It just makes you feel a little bit more with it and a person if you have an intention.

Emily: [08:16](#) What you said reminded me of something that Kendra said on her podcast, The Lazy Genius Podcast once. She said that every morning she does something that makes her feel like a person, that makes her feel like herself so that she's not looking for herself for the rest of the day. She said it more eloquently than that, but I thought that was such a great point of just do one thing that makes you feel like yourself so that you're not flailing all day long.

Tsh: She's actually on this podcast, talked about that being the definition of self-care or at least my favorite definition of self-care. I really like the thing that makes you feel like a person. For me ,it would be reading. Someone else it might be running or whatever it is. Because it doesn't really matter what it is. I think that's so great. I love that.

We have gotten a coffee shop mug or I guess a black and white mugs is probably the thing, which by the way, I've looked it up. It's Gregory's Coffee.

Emily: Yes. Gregory's. Yes. Thank you.

Tsh: Then your next thing is your morning routine. The third thing we talk about is a work of art, this is always my favorite category. This can be a playlist, an album, a movie. It can be a dumb TV show, a book, a poem, whatever it is. Works of art I find make everything a little bit better in our lives. Emily, what is your work of art right now?

Emily: I'll tell you, I just saw *A Star is Born* for the first time last week.

Tsh: I haven't seen it yet.

Emily: Ok, we can't really talk about it.

Tsh: You can. I don't mind spoilers.

Emily: I can say this not to spoil, but I still don't really know what I think about it. Because it's been out for a while and I had in my mind, imagined what it was about. For some reason. I didn't really know what it was about. I knew it was about a singer. That's about all I knew. I think I thought that Bradley Cooper was more...I also haven't seen, what's that boxing movie with Hillary Swank?

Tsh: It's older... what is that? I know what you're talking about. *A Million Dollar Baby*?

Emily: Yeah. I haven't seen that, but I know that she's got a coach or something who's teaches her things. I think I thought it was more like Bradley Cooper was going to be this hard driving coach type person, but instead it's a love story. I didn't realize that. I don't know what's wrong with me, but I mean I thought it was a love story, but with a twist and it kind of is. All that to say it was sad. It was lovely. I loved watching the music, but afterwards I was walking around like, oh, that's going to haunt me a little bit. All that to say, I saw it. I'm glad I saw it and I still don't know what my opinion is.

Tsh: What's funny to me about that movie is that ever since it came out, I just haven't had much of a desire to see it. And yet I like Bradley Cooper and I like Lady Gaga, so I don't know why I don't want to see it, but it just didn't grab me and after the Oscars and watched their performance, which was lovely, I still was like, I don't know, I'll take care of it or leave it. I don't know why though. I understand your response.

Emily: Part of the reason why I wanted to see it is because I think Lady Gaga is brilliant. I just think she's a brilliant marketer. I think she's got a great sense about her as far as her work and the way that she rallies her tribe. It's just so fascinating to watch. And I wonder, how is she going to show up on screen? Because this is her first thing. I was so fascinated and I found myself not even thinking about that when I watched the movie, which shows that she did a great job because I forgot that she was acting. I'm just watching a movie. That did leave an impression on me. She did a really good job in that movie, I thought.

Tsh: [11:51](#) That's a good point because I feel like sometimes I veer away from movies or maybe not movies, but actors or just people whenever I think I'm going to just be thinking the whole time that's so and so acting instead of just getting lost in the movie. As I think Leonardo Dicaprio is a great actor, I think of him the entire time I'm watching, like that's him acting. Does that make sense?

Emily: Yes, that makes, he is like that. That's so funny that you say that. I do that with him too.

Tsh: Right? I showed them that for the first time last week, *Catch Me If You Can*. We are watching it and the whole time I just had IMDB open. I was looking up his stuff and I was not even into of this movie. I'm just like deep diving on his history and stuff. I'm just intrigued by he was only this age at this time. I don't know. It's just weird.

Emily: Maybe it's because he was our age-ish when we watched him grow up along with us. Maybe that's why, I don't know.

Tsh: I think so too, because I was telling the kids how old he was and to me he still looks really young. I don't know whatever, that's funny. We're deep diving on Leonardo Dicaprio.

We've got a black and white mug collection. We've got your morning routine and we've got *A Star is Born*. The fourth thing on our good list is a philosophy. This is a way of thinking, a bit of wisdom you got from somebody smart, advice you've been taking, whatever it is. What's a little philosophy right now that's making life better for you?

Emily: I'll be so honest and tell you that it's a simple phrase that I've basically built my career on the past couple of years, which is just do the next right thing in love.

Tsh: I love this because I think it's so obvious you don't need to explain it, but I want you to explain it because you could take a million angles on this. Tell me what it means to you right now.

Emily: You could, it's true. Right now. I am in the middle of, and I'm sure many people can relate to this at different seasons of life and maybe you're in the midst of the season now. I'm just in the middle of a super busy season of life both family wise and then personally and work related. I just find myself, sometimes I feel like I'm standing in the middle of a room and all around the room are shelves of all the things I have to do. It's just sitting on the shelves and I'm in the middle just spinning around, spinning, spinning, and everything feels equally important. I feel like it's gotten to the point now Tsh, where I can't even prioritize. What's the most important thing to do right now? No, they're all important. Everything's important. This phrase of doing the next right thing helps me stay in the moment and just pick one next thing. Because everybody wants to do the right thing. I mean, most of us, we want to do the right thing, but the problem is we often don't know what it is. For me the magic is not necessarily in the word, right, but in the word next. I can just simply think, okay, I'm sitting here and now after this podcast episode, what is my next right thing? It might be go take a shower. It doesn't have to be this grand, now go save the world. Although sometimes it feels like it should be that, but rarely is that true. Taking things one step at a time, having the big picture in mind, but remembering that it's not my

job to do everything at once and I can in fact do one thing at a time. I'm asking myself that question a hundred times a day. Okay, now what's my next right thing, has been really life saving for me these days.

Tsh: I think you hit on something really true whenever you talked about how everything feels important. There's some of this sage advice about that whole rubric of the urgent versus the unimportant. There's also this idea of whenever you make your to do list, just start the three most important things and just do those. I think sometimes those are laughable because listeners, and I mean many of us agree sometimes, literally everything feels important. You can't possibly middle and sometimes it really truly is. I think that's so true. This idea of you do things one at a time and so choosing to do the next right thing is really the only option we have.

Emily: It is the only option, even though it doesn't seem like it, because you're right, you can only do one thing at a time. I know there are people saying, are you kidding? You haven't seen me in the kitchen at dinner time with my toddler. I'm doing a million things at once. We can multitask, it's possible. But even when you multitask, even if your things are separated by a second, you're still just doing one thing at a time. There's still a focus on this thing, this thing, especially when it comes to the tasks on your to do list and so sometimes I realize I spend so much time deciding what to do next that wow, in those 15 minutes I could have actually done one of those things if I would have asked myself the question, what's my next right thing?

Tsh: When you started your podcast, of the same name. Gosh, has it been over a year now?

Emily: It's been, it was August of 2017, so it's been a year and a half.

Tsh: I remember your emphasis was on this idea of decision fatigue and that the idea of doing the next right thing is a cure for that, I guess. Do you find, just talking to listeners, a lot of people deal with decision fatigue or is it something else? Is it something deeper than that?

Emily: [17:13](#) I think for probably most people who I hear from, it is decision fatigue. It can be surprising because a lot of times decision fatigue comes for people who historically in their own life, they've been really confident decision makers. They haven't had this sense of chronic hesitation where they have trouble making decisions. Some of us, even when we were little, we have trouble choosing. We don't know what to choose at a restaurant. We hesitate and so we know I don't like making decisions. But there's a whole another category of people who never really struggled that way. As we've gotten older and we have more responsibility and we wear more hats, we make more decisions in a day. And really being a

good decision maker is not a character trait. We can all make a good decision or a bad decision on any given day. It's really more about our capacity and also the sheer volume of decisions that we have to make. I think it surprises people sometimes who are maybe they're an executive, or maybe they work in this high powered position, but then something happens, like a parent gets sick or they have to move or they have a job transition. They have to an opportunity they have to decide on quickly and they feel paralyzed. It's surprising because you think, it's my job to make decisions and yet here I am and I feel stuck. I think that's a great example of someone who just has had to make so many decisions and now this next decision has tipped the scales towards I'm totally fatigued and I'm not quite sure which way to move.

Tsh: [18:50](#) The reason I even ask that is because I don't think of myself classically as someone who struggles with indecision. I think of myself as a quick decision maker. Yet I feel like so much of what your podcast and your new book resonates with me has so much more to do with the decision fatigue I'm not aware I have, because there's some study that shows adults make 35,000 decisions a day or something like that. To me, I know it's there, but I'm not hyper aware of it, but I know there is a low key malaise in my soul after a while. I think it has to do with something related to decision fatigue and just trusting that my day will matter in the long run because it all matters and it also in a good way doesn't matter. Does that make sense?

Emily: [19:40](#) Yes, it makes total sense. You make a great point Tsh, because when we're hungry, our body tells us and we know exactly what that signal means. When we're sleepy, we yawn. We know what that signal means. But when we are suffering from decision fatigue, all of those things might happen. None of those things might happen. We might just feel a general sense of fussiness and we don't know what it is and we might not be able to name it. Decision fatigue is sneaky because there are bodily signs but they're not clear and we haven't learned sometimes to pay attention to those signals that our bodies give us. In some ways I think it helps to have some pre-made decisions about your own day in life. For example, my friend Traci, she and her husband don't talk about big life things after 6:30 at night. They won't do it. They don't talk about the kids schooling choices. They don't talk about work stuff after 6:30 because they know after 6:30 they're not going to make decisions that they love. They're just going to wait until the morning. Things like that, I think are really smart and we're wise to recognize in ourselves. Those times when decisions feel more natural and don't feel as heavy versus when we are going to be spinning around and chasing our tail because our body and we don't always know what those signals mean.

Tsh: That's really good. Do you personally feel anything right now, with the topic as broad as the next right thing, you've covered a lot of angles on your podcast

and in your book, but for you, Emily P. Freeman, right now in the midst of getting ready to release a book, do you feel anything right now that's really resonating with you that you're having to remind yourself in this genre of philosophy?

Emily: [21:22](#) Yes. One thing in this time of like you said, getting ready to release a book, and I'm really focused on my work right now and one of my next right things is to choose my absence. The concept is choose your absence from things that, not from things that don't matter, but maybe things that don't matter as much so that you can be present for the things that you want to prioritize. There can be a temptation when you're in the midst of a launch or a big thing in your work, there can be a temptation to feel like you have to be in all the places at once. But in fact your presence can have more impact when you choose your absence from the secondary things and that's something, that's one of the next right things I'm holding onto in my own life right now is choosing my absence because I'm finding that it's keeping me a little bit more grounded.

Tsh: [22:14](#) It's that classic idea of saying no to everything but the very best thing for you right now.

Segment Two

Tsh: [25:20](#) I ask because I've been thinking about this knowing I was going to talk to you and for me right now the next right thing idea that's really been resonating with me is this idea of choosing to rest even when things are full and busy and maybe even, especially when things are full and busy because I think a lot of us right now, with kids especially we're on the tail end of the school year. Calendars really start filling up. For those of us who work right now, it might start feeling busy as we look towards summer, basically plates are very full right now and to me I'm learning to choose rest. There was a tweet that went out that stopped me in my tracks a few days ago and it's by a guy named Rich Villodas, I think is how you say his last name. He was preparing a sermon about Sabbath and he unpacked five truths about Sabbath, but one of them that he said was the simple idea that Sabbath is a reminder that our work will remain incomplete.

Hearing that was exactly what I needed at the time. But just a reminder that I have to stop because no matter what, I will go to bed with my grand to-do list undone. Choosing to rest is embracing that idea instead of being defeated by that idea. It's this idea that my work doesn't define the value of a good day or just the concept of productivity isn't my identity. For me, that's my next right thing is choosing to stop. I think your sister does such a good job at this. She's in one of my work groups and she talked about how for her, her goal is not so much to get a lot done so that she can get the next thing going on her plate. It's so that she can stop and for her she feels like whenever her work is done for the

day, she can leave work early and go do something else. That was something I needed to hear, this idea of instead of trying to get more done, actually stop and enjoy. That's my next right thing.

Emily: I love that Tsh, it reminds me of Sally Breedlove's book that's called *Choosing Rest*. In that her definition of rest is, rest is allowing the present to be imperfect. I love that because I do often think, well I'll rest once I finish ABC and I think rest is just around the corner. But in fact life has no corners. It's just a circle. We can keep running on that circle if we let ourselves. I love what you say about choosing it in the midst of things being undone. That is such a practice. It's such a grownup thing to do that we aren't taught, we're not taught that in school.

Tsh: [28:03](#) We're not taught what it feels like to check something off the box, what's next? I think that's, that's why rest is so important and why God made our bodies to have to stop every single day and rest for a good chunk of it. I'm excited about your book coming out. I think a lot of people will resonate with it. It seems very universal and yet very specific to our time in place right now with a lot of people. I'm very, very glad you wrote it.

Emily: Oh, thank you.

Segment Three

Tsh: Haley, I know the obvious for this month on the liturgical calendar, which is Easter and Holy Week, but I know there's other stuff going on. Fill us in on what we can expect this April.

Haley: [28:56](#) Sure. As I was thinking about this episode and April, I was thinking that we did cover a lot of Holy Week and Easter stuff in our deep dive. But something I don't think we talked about was Passion Sunday, this year it will be the 7th, I believe.

Tsh: [29:16](#) Right. Just a few days after this goes out.

Haley: [29:20](#) It's the fifth Sunday of Lent and it's the transition from preparation in the desert Lent idea to getting ready for the passion. The holy week, the crucifixion and suffering of Jesus. It's moving as we're getting closer and closer and closer to Good Friday, basically. One thing that is traditional that usually my kids will not let me forget because I love doing this, is the veiling of statues and crucifixes and crosses. Just as in the passion, Jesus is taken away, we cover up images to remind ourselves that that's coming. Usually it's purple cloth. If you have a cross up over your door, a crucifix over the door, you cover that with a little purple cloth. Any sacred art, that sort of thing, you cover up and it'll be

covered up when we go to church but you can also do it in the home. It's something my kids really like going around and doing.

Tsh: [30:32](#) What's interesting about this to me is that in our parish we have purple cloth over our crosses and our images the entire season of lent. Is this a similar idea?

Haley: [30:44](#) I think it's the same idea. It's just traditionally done for the very end of Lent starting passion into the fifth Sunday. The very same idea and it's a visual reminder of it's Lent, Passion Week, Holy Week is coming. I don't know if you have this experience Tsh, but it's a little bit visually upsetting. I feel like. You're used to seeing these images and it reminding you of God and of Jesus and having them covered up feels a little bit unnerving. I think that that is supposed to be the case.

Tsh: [31:21](#) Yeah, that makes sense. I mean, even just the idea of during Lent for example, not saying Alleluia, it drives my eight year old crazy, first of all, he hates that. It does feel like a little bit wrong, you know? I think that's that's the idea of Lent all together is that it's supposed to feel like an itchy sweater in some ways, to remind us of what Lent is about, so to me this feels like another case of that and I like that.

Haley: [31:45](#) Yes, interrupting our usual broadcasting is the feeling of it. I think that's exactly right. It's supposed to make us feel a little bit off balance to remind us of what we're preparing for.

Tsh: [31:57](#) Okay, that's good. I like that there is a dedicated Sunday for that. I was not aware. We've got passion Sunday and then we move into Holy Week. This year, Easter is on April 21st so working backwards, the week before Easter is Holy Week. And we have talked about that already in an episode that I will link to in the show notes, but I still think it's a good idea to just hit the high points. Haley, you went to tell us a little bit about what to expect that week?

Haley: [32:26](#) I grew up, the tradition I grew up in, I did not grow up Catholic, jumped from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. I distinctly remember Palm Sunday as a child, but didn't always have anything going on that week at church until Easter Sunday again. We talk about what was happening at home, read some scriptures and things, but I've found it really helpful as I've been in a more liturgical tradition that you have Palm Sunday, like I remember but then there's other things during that week that lead up to that Easter celebration.

Tsh: [33:01](#) will just say that I grew up nondenominational and I barely even remember Palm Sunday. It would only be every now and then that the pastor would even bring it up and occasionally, it might make it into that week's

sermon, which I now look back and think, oh my gosh, we are missing so much. All I knew about was Easter, really, and I think palm Sunday has a week before? It's just funny how things have turned now that I'm Anglican where it's full on immersion. Just saying that for anybody else listening that might even be thinking, okay, what is Palm Sunday? I get it.

Haley: [33:37](#) Once it becomes more second nature to walk through Holy Week, it's hard to imagine going back because it's hard to celebrate Easter if you don't note that Jesus died, right? We get palm Sunday, the next thing is Spy Wednesday, that is the day where Judas betrayed Jesus. I think that's maybe less, not as popular. It's not as celebrated or observed. You don't have to go to church that day, but that's what's happening in the story as you go along through the week. And then Thursday, we call it Holy Thursday, but I've also heard Maundy Thursday in some traditions. That's the Last Supper. All the disciples are together the last supper before Jesus goes to the garden of Gethsemane. And Friday, Good Friday, which I feel like most people are semi-familiar with Good Friday. My husband just got a new job, it's not a religious organization, but they get off for Good Friday. Everybody gets off work for Good Friday, which I think is cool. Good Friday, the day where Jesus died on the cross and then Holy Saturday. I think of Good Friday until you go back to church to celebrate Easter as like a very quiet, somber time. There's not a lot going on. There's a lot of quiet and waiting until you get to celebrate again. Whether that's the night before Easter, you go to a vigil or you go early in the morning or you go regular Easter Sunday morning, sets that somber, quiet season there between the death of Jesus and his resurrection.

Tsh: [35:29](#) I wouldn't say I do the social media for my parish, but I do the social media for certain events like advents and holy week. I just post art, church history, historic art. I remember last year when I was looking for what to post when, that Saturdays was especially somber because it was basically, obviously Good Friday is Jesus on the cross. Then Saturday is just the burial idea. Jesus in a shroud, Jesus in a tomb and people mourning. It's a state of mourning I would say on Saturday. Even if those of us who know the end of the book, know what's going to happen on Sunday. There is still something valuable to have that mindset of mourning on the Saturday after Good Friday.

Haley: [36:18](#) Absolutely, and thinking about what the disciples and what Mary would have been experiencing, even like the practical aspects of preparing the body for burial, those things that I feel like I sometimes gloss over in my mind, taking the time to think about what would that have felt like for everyone mourning Jesus? I think that that's a really, really important time. I have a lot of young kids, so it's not like you can be like, okay kids, it's quiet time until tomorrow night. But we try to tone it down. Maybe not do tablets or computer games. Last year we

watched, I don't think my children are ready for *A Passion for Christ*. We are not there yet. They're not old enough for that. But we watched, I think it's called *The Gospel of John*. I'd have to look it up. I think we just streamed it on Amazon and it's just the whole gospel of John just straight from scripture. The guy who plays Jesus is from *Lost* and I'm trying to remember it. But it was, it was good. I felt like it wasn't gruesome in the way that the passion is to that it was a lot more appropriate for children. It's a very long, because it was the entire gospel of John and it gave them something to do a little bit and I sat and watched with them and that kept the tone of this is really what we're focusing on.

Tsh: [37:51](#) I see it on Amazon and I am still trying to figure out who plays him, but I know what you're talking about. We'll link to in the show notes.

Haley: [37:59](#) Then you go back to church and it's Easter. That's the real exciting one.

Tsh: [38:07](#) I will say that in our episode that we've already done on Holy Week, when you listen to it, it is really fascinating to me the difference. First of all, the difference for me now that I'm Anglican versus when I was just more low church Protestant has been so meaningful to me during Holy Week and especially Easter. But you Catholics really take Easter up to 11 and I just get fascinated watching and hearing about it all and I think you into it in that episode. I will scroll Twitter, to look at y'all's Easter vigils because it is a bit intense, in a good way. I say that all complimentary.

Haley: It is a little bit extra. We are extra about Easter.

Tsh: Yeah you are. What is up with a fire outside? That looks intense. I want to go sometime just to see what is this? Yeah, that's really interesting to me.

Haley: You should take a little drive up 35 sometime.

Tsh: I should, that would be fun. All right, so we've got Holy Week and that's really what the buildup probably is for most of us this month in April for the liturgical calendar. We've got a few things later in the month. Tell us a little bit, because I am completely in the dark about this and I'm interested to learn more.

Haley: [39:20](#) Okay. There are a couple of really fun saints at the end of April. One of them is Saint George on April 23rd, and there's no historical record. He was a Roman soldier who was then monitored by the persecution of Emperor Diocletian. This is, I think like third century.

Tsh: [39:40](#) Yes. I stayed in his castle a few nights when we were in Croatia.

Haley: Diocletian?

Tsh: Our Airbnb, turned out it was part of Diocletian's palace.

Haley: [39:52](#) We know that about him. However, all of these legends arose that are allegory about Saint George. It's Saint George, and he's fighting this dragon that has been persecuting this country and eating up all of their folk. He comes in and he fights the dragon and frees the people. I think there's different theories about what all of that means. But you know, it could be the persecution of the church is a dragon or just the evil is sin is a dragon and Saint George is coming in. It's just a made up legend about Saint George. There's a great children's picture book about it that has beautiful illustrations. It's called Saint George and the Dragon. I think that the author is Margaret Hodges, just drawing on some of the those medieval legends and the illustrator, I want to say it's Trina or something like that, but the illustrations are really cool. That's just for fun. He didn't really fight a dragon. Dragons aren't really real.

Tsh: [41:00](#) I know this book. I love this illustrator in particular. I know exactly what you're talking about. We'll link to in the show notes.

Haley: [41:07](#) It almost looks a little bit like illuminated manuscript on the outside, it's cool. Saint George is the patron Saint of merry England. We always do something like shepherd's pie or something a bit British on Saint George's Day.

Tsh: [41:24](#) I love any excuse to pretend to be British. I'm here for that.

Haley: [41:28](#) One of my favorite saints ever is, her feast day is April 29th, and it's Saint Catherine of Sienna. She's from Sienna in Italy.

Tsh: I was going to say, I've actually been to the cathedral where her where her relics are.

Haley: That is so cool. She was born in the 14th century in Italy, in a middle class family. She was the 22nd of 25 children in the family or something insane. And so she was just regular Italian girl who was not taught to read. She was not literate. It's just a wild story because she just very devoted to Jesus. She becomes so influential just because she was thought to be so holy and her devotion to God that she became advisor to pope's and to kings and seems that like God gave her supernatural literacy. One day she didn't know how to read and the next day she's writing letters to people. This was later after she's no longer a child, she's late teens or early twenties. If you're familiar with that era of history, that's during like the Avignon Pope's where the pope left Rome and there's all this crazy stuff. She was all about getting the pope back to Rome and people listened to her, popes and kings were writing her, what should we do, Catherine? Which I just love that. It's just this Italian girl. She is wonderful. She's one of the patron saints of Italy along with Saint Francis of Assisi who I know you love.

Tsh: I adore.

Haley: She is a doctor of the church. I think there's only 36 people who are considered doctors of the church and that means that they had a very powerful influence on theology of the church. She's like one of a handful of women and one of only 36 people altogether that are considered doctors of the church. That's a really big deal.

Tsh: That's super cool.

Haley: Another one is Saint Therese of Lisieux, who was a French nun. Another one is Hildegard von Bingen who was a German.

Tsh: I love all those ladies.

Haley: That's neat. I just love that she was born 22nd and 25 kids in Sienna, Italy, no big deal. Then she's bossing around all of the monarchs and popes and things, which I think is great. There is an amazing biography of her, which I guess it'd be a hagiography if it's about a saint by Sigrid Unset, who is one of my favorite writers.

Tsh: I knew that.

Haley: I will never stop talking about her. I talk about her all the time. It's just really fascinating, if you're interested in that era of history, it's a really interesting book and I think really helps you dive into what the 13th century, sorry, 14th century mindset would have been. I think that Sigrid Unset is really good at making that accessible, how people would have thought in that time. That's really, really fun. Highly recommend that little book.

Tsh: Very cool. In terms of this being Italy, I would presume maybe Italian food?

Haley: Oh yeah. I think for sure Italian food. Then that's easy because you've got a lot of directions you can go in with that.

Tsh: Yeah, I was going to say any excuse for Italian food. I'm here for that as well. This is a good food month.

Haley: [45:08](#) Yes, absolutely, especially with Easter. Easter is all about good food, too.

Tsh: This is a good month. I mean, not that not every month is good, but you know what I mean? This is a full month of good stuff with good people to remember and recognize, the least of which is Jesus.

Thank you for your wisdom, Haley. You are always so smart about all these things. You teach me something every month. This is largely the reason I even have this segments, so I appreciate your time.

Haley: Absolutely. I love chatting about it. Thanks, Tsh.

Tsh: [45:47](#) You can find Haley on her blog at CarrotsforMichaelmas.com and on Twitter and Instagram @HaleyCarrots. You can find Emily's work, including her blog and podcast at emilypfreeman.com and on Instagram at @EmilyPFreeman and definitely check out her new book called *The Next Right Thing*. It is really so good. To keep up with me, I'm on twitter @Tsh and Instagram @TshOxenreider and of course at TheArtofSimple.net. Head to the show notes for this episode, number 189 at TheSimpleShow.com where you can find all sorts of things, links to things we talked about where you can sign up for my weekly email called Five Quick Things, how you can become a patron and support the work it takes to create the show for just a few dollars per month as well as how to get Emily's book. This show was produced by Chad Michael Snavely and Jesse Montonya and thanks also to Caroline TeSelle, Andrea Debbink, and my furry intern, Ginny. Thanks so much for listening. I'm Tsh Oxenreider and I'll catch you back here soon.