

Episode 15: The unnamed mystics | A conversation with Kimberly Russaw

## **The overlooked women of the Hebrew Bible can help us to see the overlooked people in our lives.**

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Kimberly Russaw was my professor of African American biblical hermeneutics and Womanist biblical interpretation at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. I was happy to reconnect with her--she is now professor of Hebrew Bible at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary--to talk about contemplation and mysticism in the Hebrew scriptures, and the ways in which contemplation can clear us: "One way to think about it," she said, "is a person is in the subject position when it comes to

contemplation but in the object position when it comes to mysticism.”

In this conversation, Dr. Russaw talks about her work as a Womanist scholar, expressing how part of her work as a professor and scholar is to “engage others in life we may have read over....missed or misread all along.” As she wrote in her essay “Wisdom in the Garden,” “Womanist ways of reading the biblical text are subversive in that, by and large, they disrupt tightly held images of God and God's relationship to humanity.”

Kimberly D. Russaw is associate professor of Hebrew Bible at [Pittsburgh Theological Seminary](#). She is a member of the [Society of Biblical Literature](#), where she serves as the chair of the African American Biblical Hermeneutics program unit. She is also an editorial board member of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Her many publications include [Revisiting Rahab: Another Look at the Woman of Jericho](#), and “Undaunted: Reading Miriam for the Sisters They Tried to Erase” in [Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation 30th Anniversary Expanded Edition](#). Russaw has lectured or presented at events for PBS, Bible and Religions of the Ancient Near East, the Association of Theological Schools, and the Society of Biblical Literature, in addition to events at many universities and seminaries. She received her Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel from Vanderbilt University, and she is an ordained itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.