

LOVE PERIOD.

WITH REV. DR.
JACQUI LEWIS

Live Justly with Rev. Otis Moss III

Jacqui Lewis: Hey everybody. Jacqui Lewis here. Welcome to this second season of Love. Period. This season, we're focusing our conversations on my new book, *Fierce Love: A Bold Path to Ferocious Courage and Rule-breaking Kindness That Can Heal the World*. Each of my friends will be helping you to think about the themes in each chapter. Nine practical practices that can help us love ourselves, love our posse, and then love the world and the healing. It all starts with you. And we're going to give you practical tips to make these practices a part of your life. Today, we are going to be having a conversation inspired by my book, *Fierce Love*. The seventh chapter, *Live Justly*. Choose fairness and equality every day.

Jacqui Lewis: I thought there was no one better to have this conversation with me than my friend Otis Moss the III. He is the senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. He's a fantastic preacher. He says the blues inspire him, and he's my little brother, and he calls me his bossy big sister. Let's see what you think about that. I hope you enjoy this episode. Otis Moss, the III, lues preacher, how you doing?

Otis Moss III: I am good. How are you doing Storm?

Jacqui Lewis: I'm fine. I'm fine. I feel a little stormy today. How are you Bishop?

Otis Moss III: I'm doing okay. I can't complain. I'm here in the land of the living, so that's always a good thing.

Jacqui Lewis: In the land of the living. Isn't there a song that has that in there? I will, something in the, something of the, I will reside in the temple of the Lord in the land of the living, something, I don't know. Hi. Why are you Bishop and why am I Storm? What's that about?

Otis Moss III: Okay, so let's, for those who are not familiar-

Jacqui Lewis: Let's pull it on in here.

Otis Moss III: We are part of the Auburn Fellows program. And when we met, it became very clear that each person had particular personalities. And so as a comic book nerd, I thought it would be appropriate that we draw from the X-Men, the X-Factor and the X-Teams from Marvel comic books, because originally, Stan Lee was attempting how he could participate in what was going on nationally, which was the civil rights movement. He wasn't going to get out there on the street, but when he wrote the X-Men, he specifically had a vision of Professor X promoting the idea of Dr. King's vision of the beloved community, and Magneto promoting Malcolm X's radical vision of love, of radical love. And so he took those two ideologies and infused them in the X-Men. Just a little backdrop. And then when I met everybody, everybody I thought had a great opportunity for a code name.

Otis Moss III: And when I met none other than Reverend Jacqui Lewis, she fit so well with the character Storm. One, because Storm is a very gifted multicultural leader in the X narrative. She has these African roots, but she is educated in London, and she is able to go to and fro in different communities. And then of course, she manipulates the weather. When she comes into a space, the atmosphere changes, and it was so very obvious that my friend, Jacqui Lewis changes the atmosphere whenever she enters into a room.

Jacqui Lewis: Otis, when you say it that way, it just makes me feel so powerful. Like I can change the

weather.

Otis Moss III: You do. I mean, that's what you do. You serve at a church that is multicultural, it has all of these different types of people. You change the atmosphere by your leadership, you draw heavily from that mythos, the narrative of Storm, of being a person of the world, that you are local and global consistently, in everything that you do.

Jacqui Lewis: I love that. Thank you for seeing that that way. When you and I first met also, you would tell me, "I'm praying for you Storm." And you'd be praying for me often, but also, especially, I just think you knew when the world was on fire with racial tension, and we were chanting, "Black lives matter." In the streets, with my little multiracial church wearing hoodies and whatnot, I feel like you were praying for the border I was on, Otis, the boundaries I was crossing, and how to hold all that together. Is that right?

Otis Moss III: Yeah, absolutely. I mean when I witnessed your leadership, being in spaces, as a black person, and then being in space as a black woman, you were New York. In a Dutch reformed church. It's not Harlem. It's not Queens. It's not Brooklyn. You're in the heart of Manhattan. And here you are leading this amazing community of people who are movers and shakers, but also artists. And you are the leader, the servant leader in that space. And I know how hard that can be, that leadership is difficult as it is, but then it becomes a different level of challenge when you are a person kissed by nature's son, another level of challenge when you are a woman. And another challenge when you are Storm, when you are fiercely who you are. And unapologetic, you don't apologize about being Jacqui Lewis.

Jacqui Lewis: No, no, I don't. I used to, I used to, but I don't anymore.

Otis Moss III: You can't apologize for that.

Jacqui Lewis: No, you can't. I have just really treasured that from you. The phone calls of just how's it going. And honestly, Otis, feeling like we're in this movement together, and that our particularities, yours, comic book nerd by self-admission, but also poet, writer. Excellent preacher. I've used your preaching tapes in teaching preaching classes, all my little teaching career before I knew you.

Otis Moss III: And I apologize for whatever the students heard.

Jacqui Lewis: No, no, no. So good. Just multivocal yourself Otis is kind of where I'm going. You are a younger than me, you're still 40-something, right? Is that true?

Otis Moss III: No. I've crossed the threshold.

Jacqui Lewis: You crossed over the, come on baby. Come on over to the light side, post-50, but you're a poetic jazz-infused culturally rich, biblically relevant justice, badassery makes you a certain kind of weather changer and a certain kind of border crosser. How does that feel to you when I say that? Do you think of yourself as a person that straddles borders? You who are black preaching royalty?

Otis Moss III: Not even close. That's very kind.

Jacqui Lewis: Got to get that in there.

Otis Moss III: I appreciate that very much, that sisters are usually prone to hyperbole. So I appreciate my sister with her hyperbole, but I kind of see myself in many ways as nomadic.

Jacqui Lewis: Oh, that's good.

Otis Moss III: A nomad denominationally, a nomad theologically. And this is why, because of the tradition that I came out of. I come out of the heart of the black church tradition. I come out of the heart of the black church freedom tradition. And when I grew up, I thought every single church was about social justice. I just assumed that. And I just thought there were just two churches. There were some white people went to, and the ones that black folk went to.

Jacqui Lewis: But they were all about social justice.

Otis Moss III: Well, the white church wasn't, the white church was just kind of, they sang songs about the whispering meadows, and how nice Jesus is. And I thought the black church was like let's get down and grimy and figure this thing out. Until I went to college, I realized, I said, "Oh, there are all these denominations." Because out of my tradition, because my parents were from the civil rights movement, and they met there. So all of their friends and colleagues preached at the church. And they were different denominations. So I assumed if you were Pentecostal, you were justice-centered. If you're Episcopalian, you were justice-centered. If you were congregational, you were justice-centered, so on and so on. And then they had relationships with people who were Muslim and who were Jewish, who were Hindu.

Otis Moss III: So I just assumed that you were to gather ecumenically and interfaith, and you have to fight against in the words of Public Enemy, you have to fight power. That's just the way as a kid, I grew up. And so I go to college and there are all these people who are like, "Oh no, we have the truth. No, we're better than you." I was like, "Who are you people?" I was like, "Where did you come from?" So I felt like a nomad, that I was wait a minute. My tradition is a very small tradition. I thought it was the majority. And I've come to find out that I was in the minority. And that was a real interesting wake up call for me, because I'd never had a conversation with someone who was Southern Baptist and black.

Otis Moss III: I had a conversation with people whose church might have been founded in the Southern Baptist contrition, but they didn't follow Southern Baptist doctrine. They just said, "Historically we're Southern Baptist, but we don't think much of them." But then all of a sudden I'm running into people who really have a deep connection to the denomination and who were black. And it was eye opening. And I had to put some of my prejudice and check it because I was like, wait a minute, you Southern Baptist, and you're black?

Jacqui Lewis: Is there such a thing?

Otis Moss III: Yeah. I said, "You can be from the south and be Baptist and be black, but you hold

on to the tradition?" I said, "Didn't they put us, they wanted to keep slavery." But anyway, that was just kind of me.

Jacqui Lewis: Well, not just you, that would be me too. I want to talk about what you've just said, but I want to go back to your roots, your dad, you and your dad, you did a beautiful movie this last year about your dad, your granddad, voting. It's not difficult to make the connection between you and your dad, but everyone doesn't know that your dad is a movement builder, freedom riding brother. Tell me a little bit about what's at the heart of your theology Otis, that comes from your experience as a boy growing up in your house with your mom and your dad, and all the things that they experienced. What part of their story is inside your soul?

Otis Moss III: Well, I think the fundamental theological framework that I witnessed was this idea of love and struggle. My father preached on that consistently. The greatest commandment was central to his theology. He was out of that black, Southern faith tradition that believed that there is struggle, that you have to engage struggle. In everything. It's not just struggle against systems, that a seed bursting from the ground must struggle. A bird coming out of an egg must struggle, that to become a butterfly, you've got to press your way out of the Chrysalis. He shared that because he comes from that rural background. He said, "That's the way life is." And in that struggle is when you develop your wings, as the story goes, that the butterflies that do not survive are butterflies that have a weak Chrysalis or cocoon.

Otis Moss III: I know for those who are technical about it, I'm supposed to say Chrysalis and not cocoon, but most people know cocoon, but anyway, and they said that if it's easy for the butterfly to get out, that butterfly will die immediately. Because there's not enough blood that has gone to the wings. But if it's difficult for the butterfly to get out, then more blood is pumped into the wings and more color is infused in the butterfly, and they can make their trip to Mexico. And so those are the kind of rural creation theological metaphors that I would grow up with. And my father would share those kinds of things. My mother would share those ideas and that love and struggle, struggle and love will be a part of your life if you keep love centered and you will be able to make it through the struggle. And if you know that there's going to be struggle, it will never discount or marginalize the center P of love. So they always, they, they work together. Oh my gosh,

Jacqui Lewis: That's so beautiful. I'm going to, I'm going to a little bit butcher butcher this quote from Dr. King, but justice is love, correcting everything that stands against love. Something like that. That feels like it's birthed in that movement. That sense of maybe I'm thinking about birth pains as a struggle too, right now, the way we are just in the hottest mess times. And mother earth is struggling, and the value of black lives is struggling. And voters' rights is struggling. And environmental justice is struggling and economic justice is struggling and there are too many guns on our streets and that's a struggle and black boys and black girls are being killed and that's a struggle. It's like the universe. What does Paul say? Otis, all of creation waits-

Otis Moss III: Groans.

Jacqui Lewis: Like a woman, groans like a woman in child birth. Waiting for the children of God to show themselves. That's about birth.

Otis Moss III: Yes. Yes.

Jacqui Lewis: Where's your struggle most right now?

Otis Moss III: That's a good question. I guess mine is always on the internal level in terms of trying to be authentically who I am in relationship to God. I think that's a daily struggle. Because as Tillich talks about, ultimate concern that our culture will present idols that mask themselves as an ultimate concern. And in ministry, in any form of leadership, you're going to think that your schedule and your timetables and all these things are important, and they're not, and you got to keep reminding yourself that struggle for authenticity and who you are, you got to fight with every day, so that you are not set off track. It's an interesting kind of thing that someone was sharing with me about maps, about longitude and latitude. And they said that if you're a few step off, walking 10 feet, walking 100 feet, you'll reach your destination. If you're one or two degrees off trying to go to another continent, you won't make it.

Jacqui Lewis: That's right. That's right. That's right. That's a good one.

Otis Moss III: You got to be exact. The long haul, the small steps that are off can affect where you will end up. So you've always got to check your compass.

Jacqui Lewis: This is a preaching moment.

Otis Moss III: And I think that that's what I struggle with all the time. It's like I got to keep checking my compass.

Jacqui Lewis: To see if you are heading where you authentically should head, being called where you authentically are called. To see what the end's going to be. I'm taking it one step further.

Otis Moss III: And people will tell you where you're supposed to be called and what you're supposed to be doing. And you may not, that may not be your piece. I'm pretty sure you experience that all the time. We need you here. You're Jacqui Lewis. You need to do this. You represent this group, and it may not be authentically what you've been called to, nor can you be most effective when you are living in the shadow of someone else's desire for you, and not what God demands and desires for you.

Jacqui Lewis: Well, that resonates. I do feel, I feel like you know me enough to know with my weather changing behind that I will run into every fire, into every storm, into every moment. And sometimes I'm not so good at, that's just not mine. Someone else could do that part. And I should just go over here. I'm really not that great at that. I think you know. How do you, in a world that is calling out for prophetic voices Otis, around justice issues, fixing the world, healing the world, Tikkun olam, what's your practice? Do you have a practice of how you listen to what God is saying? How do you get there?

Otis Moss III: Yeah. Mine has always been, I'm very much a thurmanite, Howard Thurman, for those who are listening. I'm a huge Thurman fan and disciple of Thurman's techniques. And because I went to Morehouse, and because of my father, my mother, they were highly influenced by,

both of them were influenced by Howard Thurman. So the idea of being quiet, silence, and music becomes very important to me, to find those spaces and rhythms, and then in prayer to hear that unique voice. And it's very much a whisper that you're trying to listen to all of your days, and sometimes you don't get it. And sometimes you think you get it and then a lot of times it's just silent. I mean, just be just real, but you stick to it.

Otis Moss III: And so the practice of the time to be quiet, pray, and be in spaces to listen to music, usually without lyrics, the music, the sounds of piano and bass, and the sounds of violin and hearing people who are digging very deeply into their spirit to create sound, which cannot be completely articulated with the vocabulary, that help you connect for me with the sacred, with God. And then just going back to the very basic practices of scripture and prayer in those spaces become very, very important for me. Very important for me.

Jacqui Lewis: I'm so glad to know that. I feel like sometimes, well, I just feel like sometimes many of us who are in these positions of leadership and transformation, we might even say, "I did my devotions this morning." Or, "I went for a walk this morning." And I don't know that we spend enough time listening. I don't know that we spend enough time listening to jazz or music or sounds in the key of life or the still small voice of God. It's just too much noise. Right? So I'm glad to know that you sustain yourself that way.

Jacqui Lewis: You are a dad, and you are son, and you just became an intergenerational house recently. I can always feel Otis, the way your parents have brought Thurman, brought ancestors, brought God talk to you, that formed you. What would your children say daddy brought to them about living justly? Every day acts of...that's the good question, isn't it?

Otis Moss III: Wow. Yeah. Wow. That's deep. I would hope that they have developed the framework of how to practice this idea of living justly. And in certain instances I've witnessed my children that this did not, they haven't done this in vain. I came downstairs one time, went to the basement and I was looking for Elijah, and I couldn't find him. I was like, "Where'd he go?" And then I looked around the corner and he was praying. And then after he prayed, he then spent some time being quiet to meditate. And he had a journal next to him, and he was writing his thoughts and his gratitude in the journal, which is something that, he comes into my office and he sees I've got, I've been journaling for forever, just writing things down. And I have these pens, these fountain pens that I like to use.

Jacqui Lewis: Your pens.

Otis Moss III: Because they write a certain way. I just like the way the fountain pens write. And he picked that up. And it really blessed me that there he was, he was praying, he was meditating, and he was writing in the journal. And in his room, he's stolen a lot of my books, and I used to do the same thing as a kid. I'd take my father's books and put them in my room and say, "Here are the books that I'm going to take a look at, here are the books I'm going to read." And he had some of my books. And then I saw his library of books that he had purchased. So there's this king section. There's this Robert F. Kennedy section. It's a JFK section. And then he's in theater arts. So there are all of these pieces in/around theater arts. And then he calls me, he's at Morehouse now, than he calls me the other day. And he says, "Dad, man, I just read this sister by the name of bell hooks. You ever heard of bell hooks? And I fell out laughing.

Otis Moss III: I said, “Yeah. She’s bad.” He said, “She’s bad. She’s bad. Dad, this is amazing. I’ve never read anything like that. And then this other sister Octavia Butler, you know who she is?” Like, “Yeah, I do.” What was interesting, I had the same reaction I was in college. And so it’s just been interesting to see and then to watch my daughter as she’s in her senior year, as she has now integrated the practices of music and needing her silence. And she’s an artist, she’s the artistic one in our family, where she has now infused by I really like this Kehinde Wiley, pop. That this guy can really, really do it. I like his style. And break down the process of what it takes to do something artistically.

Otis Moss III: And that becomes a form of practice for her. I’m really excited for our children, for the possibilities, Elijah, he’s in college, he’ll soon be out very soon. And then McKayla, who is about to step into school, and she’s bringing these spiritual practices of I’m a child of God. Art is a gift. It’s a way in which to express one’s gift and relationship to God. And to see a 17-year-old do that is quite remarkable.

Jacqui Lewis: That must make your heart beat fast. That’s so cool. I love that.

Otis Moss III: They’re good folks they’re good folks. They’re hilarious, they’re they’re good folks.

Jacqui Lewis: Well, their dad is good folks and is hilarious. And their mom is, so that seems hereditary. This king quote is coming back in my brain better, power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. And justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love. Isn’t that beautiful? I’m like, I don’t think we know that one as well.

Otis Moss III: Yeah. That is beautiful.

Jacqui Lewis: But that’s hot. That’s really hot.

Otis Moss III: Yeah. That is.

Jacqui Lewis: It feels very Gandhi back here. Otis, when I was young, there was nothing better in the world than watching my mother, whatever she was doing. Sitting on those pink, did your mother have pink, fluffy, 10 years might have saved you from this, the difference in our ages, but everything on mama’s bathrooms forever were always pink. Like Pepto Bismol pink. So those fluffy toilet seat things, shaggy, oh my God. And then the one on the floor and then the one up, oh my God. But I would just sit there and perch and watch her take Dixie Peach Powder that was too light for her, but rub it in, and it smelled good. I watched her get the lipstick just right. And press the tissue, make the biscuits, throw down on some pot roast with that gravy, with the roux, fry the chicken and drip it, I just studied her.

Jacqui Lewis: And as I was writing the book, the thing I was remembering most about studying her also was watching her, how she watched the world. And so you talk about Kennedy and stuff, that brings back me watching her watch Kennedy’s funeral. And John John salute, I’m just old enough to remember watching, we all watched Robert Kennedy killed, he walks off the stage, and get shot back there. And the football player that kind of tries to save him and all those stories. And so I do think that there’s something about the way our children watch us. Watch you, our grandchildren watching us, Joel watching John, me watching my mom, that sets up something in you about what is just, what is good, what is fair.

Jacqui Lewis: What is love? What is life? What is the world supposed to look like? And I’m wondering about all this junk in the world about critical race theory, and these parents and these teachers who don’t want their children to know these stories, to learn these stories, to know, to learn how to watch the world, Otis, through the eyes of the other, through the story of America. You feel me? Through the truth

of racial injustice in America. What kinds of children are we going to raise if they don't get to watch their parents do justice, or talk about justice, or name what's unjust? Are you worried about this at all? Is this my worry?

Otis Moss III: No, I'm very much worried about the dis-civility within our society, number one. And I'm also worried about our children bowing down to myths of kind of white supremacist ideology, and thinking that the world revolves around a particular community. And nothing else.

Jacqui Lewis: Right smack dab in the middle of Christianity is that myth.

Otis Moss III: Yeah. It's a real challenge. And I worry about how social media has increased our knowledge, but decreased our wisdom. And that is what I've witnessed with social media. I mean, our knowledge is just exponential. But our wisdom and our ability to be compassionate has decreased dramatically. Our children are yearning for the compassion and the wisdom, though they've been given access to so much more knowledge. My kids have more knowledge and information than I would've ever thought of, or had exposure to because they have a thing called a phone. They can Google anything, we've turned that into a noun and an adverb at the same time. Google it and Google, and it's dangerous. It just really is dangerous to develop a generation of knowledgeable people that do not have wisdom.

Otis Moss III: They do not have compassion. They do not have the ability to say no. When I say, say no, how I feel is how I feel and I could care less. And they share everything in this wider virtual space. And connection and human contact and conversation or cooking food and sitting down and having a meal, which was more than sitting down with a meal, but it's also learning values in the process. So if I sit down at a meal, I learn how to talk and engage with someone, I learn when someone pauses, I learn how to assist an elder when they're getting out of a chair. Just simple, basic things. I learn that if I get some food on me, I learn what to do about that. I learn the story of the food, and why we eat this on this day.

Jacqui Lewis: Right. Culture.

Otis Moss III: We're losing a lot of that.

Jacqui Lewis: Culture and history. Yeah.

Otis Moss III: Yeah, yeah. And that's how you really create human beings is people who are in the midst of ritual and community, and sharing a story.

Jacqui Lewis: No, that's right.

Jacqui Lewis: I was talking to some parents last night, parents at the Berkeley Carroll School here in New York that's like a K through 12 school in Brooklyn. And talking to them about this idea of, you say wisdom, I'm going to go honor compassion, the codes, the ethics that we teach at the table, that we teach in the laboratory that's our house, or in the basement shooting pool, whatever, or a church. And how we're missing that because there is a wider, flatter anonymous communication happening as opposed to deep personal, daddy said that and my grandpa used to say, or my big mama used to say type storytelling. So maybe we're at the power of stories to teach children what's important so adults know what's important and it's generational.

Jacqui Lewis: So we were saying that to the parents, how do they be revolutionary in their self love, so they can be revolutionary in setting a table, literally, to raise these children who love. You have a big church with lots of kids. What are you teaching your parents about how to raise justice in their children? How to

raise compassion in their children? Raise fierce love in their children?

Otis Moss III: Well, we've tried to create a curriculum. We just, I have to say, we lost our children, youth minister just recently, he got a new job. And we are so excited for him. He's now at Harvard.

Jacqui Lewis: Oh wow. Okay.

Otis Moss III: He's like, "Hey, we'll take that." Harvard got him. But he did such an extraordinary job of creating a curriculum. His name is Reverend Calvin Jones, where they designed, especially during the pandemic, a television show, a YouTube show for our kids, that shared similar to what you would see like on Sesame Street. This is what compassion is. This is how you deal with your elders. This is what taking a turn means. This is what, when someone is experiencing exclusion, how do you operate teaching early patterns of justice? It was our youth hour. And sharing those stories. It was a hit. I mean, it was a huge hit with our families, because it was just a great way for kids to learn some basic things.

Jacqui Lewis: Is it public? Can people find it?

Otis Moss III: Oh yeah. You can go on YouTube and check it out. Hopefully we will be creating some new ones in the future that are not so Trinity-centric, if you know what I mean, they're more centric to our community, but something that would be a little bit more universal. I mean universal that it wouldn't be, oh, you've got to be a part of Trinity to know what these characters are talking about. But would just give some language that would just be a little bit broader. And it was so very helpful to witness children connect, but also take the lessons. This is how we are to operate. This is how we are to pray. This is what God calls us to do. I'm supposed to be compassionate. I'm supposed to wait till you sit down at the table first because you the eldest in the family. And I want to thank you great-grandma for, can we listen to your stories? Just wonderful stuff like that. Simple stuff. But nonetheless impactful.

Jacqui Lewis: That can be missed.

Otis Moss III: Yeah.

Jacqui Lewis: Simple stuff that's missed.

Jacqui Lewis: Yes, absolutely.

Otis Moss III: When the village stops raising the kids. Everybody's busy, but the village steps in and reminds you of the epic, of the code.

Jacqui Lewis: The village steps in, that's it.

Otis Moss III: What do you know for sure about love, Otis Moss the III, Bishop, little brother. What do you know for sure about love?

Otis Moss III: What do I know for sure about love? I know that love is not only real, but it's the most powerful force in the universe. I know that love can never be fully described because poets have never stopped talking about it. Singers have never stopped singing about it, and people have never stopped believing in it. I know that it can crack earth, and bring people from the

dead. It can open doors, and it can lock doors permanently, that when you choose to love, it transforms you. When you choose to love yourself, you crawl out from the shell that you've been hiding under to borrow from Zora Neale Hurston. And it is the only pathway that we get a peripheral glimpse of God.

Jacqui Lewis: That's beautiful.

Otis Moss III: I mean, it's going to be in some form of love, of grace, of mercy, of compassion, that you get a glimpse of God. And even atheists believe in it.

Jacqui Lewis: Yes. Amen. To love another person is to see the face of God. You know that piece from *Les Misérables*, from Victor Hugo's book, oh, I love that. And when they sing it, I'm not going to sing it. It'd make your head hurt. But I love that. It makes me cry. And when we say love is fierce, or fierce love, what does that evoke in you?

Otis Moss III: It evokes a strength, a power, that it's willing to stand in the gap. I love the scripture that talks about that we are the people who are called to stand in the gap. It is healing. It is [foreign language 00:39:47]. It repairs the breach, because it's fierce. That's the love of Fannie Lou Hamer in the face of Mississippi. That's the love of Frederick Douglass who speaks about July 4th. What is it to a person who's been a slave? That's the love that after Harriet Tubman is hit with a three pound weight upon her head, she chooses to rise up and release 300 people from bondage. That's the kind of love that that Ella Baker had when she said, "I want to tell you all, you students, it's bigger than a hamburger. Don't think that we are fighting for you to eat a hamburger."

Jacqui Lewis: Come on now.

Otis Moss III: "We are fighting for your dignity so that you can be fully human." That's the love that the Gullah, the Geechee people of South Carolina believe in, in the midst of their ring shouts, that's fierce. That is the love that refuses to die, and keeps being reborn in a multiplicity of ways.

Jacqui Lewis: That is fierce. You are also fierce, my friend, and you are also love. I'm so glad you're in the world. Thank you for coming today.

Otis Moss III: Thank you so much Storm. Keep changing the weather.

Jacqui Lewis: All right my Bishop. Thank you. I'm so glad you came today, to listen to this episode. And I hope that something inspired you. Otis inspires me. I want you to think about this as we leave each other today, Sondheim maybe said it best. "Be careful the things you say, children will listen. They're listening, they're watching, they're absorbing, they're learning. Imagine every day you're living your life with your little people as an audience. How does that shape what you do?" And also think about this, many of us don't have children. But somebody someplace is paying attention to you. How you live your life, the conversations you have, and they're checking it out. Inspire them. Be your best self.