

Luke Slide

Pillars Slide

BECAUSE its mothers day.

So today- I want to show you some strong moms who led well- some people who sacrificially led- thinking about MORE others than themselves...moms who thought even more than just about their own kids—They lived their life for Jesus and for his Kingdom. No matter the cost.

Our text in the Bible today is going to have some of these women- but...

Lets start with another book- one of the best books I've read in the last 5 years... its the memoir of an Iranian refugee, Daniel Nayeri, who when he was 8 years old fled his home country and immigrated to Oklahoma with his mom and his big sister. He's now 42.

They fled because his mom became a Christian. Originally, not only was she a Muslim, but an elevated respected Muslim in Iran with bloodlines that gave her every advantage in her context...she gave it all up...to follow Jesus.

Not only did this cost them their comfort and moved them into a life of poverty, but their lives were threatened,- not to mention all the racism and xenophobia they faced as Iranian refugees in Oklahoma- sometimes coming from Xians. Even though the entire reason they left their country was because they were being persecuted BECAUSE they were Xians.

Its tragic what fear will do to us.- instead of dependence on God's presence and grace in our spiritual poverty and the spiritual wealth we have to take on any difficult situation.

But fear...does not describe Sima- Daniel's mother.

Now- here is Daniel recalling how he thought...and thinks about his Mom from his memoir **"Everything Sad is Untrue (A True Story)"**

"The legend of my mom is that she can't be stopped. Not when you hit her. Not when a whole country full of goons puts her in a cage. Not even if you make her poor and try to kill her slowly in the little-by-little poison of sadness.

And the legend is true.

I think because she's fixed her eyes on something beyond the rivers of blood, to a beautiful place on the other side.

How else would anybody do it?"

At one point, Daniel's mom has been kidnapped and interrogated by some men who threaten her to recant her faith in Christ or die...they give her a week to "think about it" then let her go.

So Daniel asks her what she did when they let her go.

She said **"I ran to the market. To get groceries. We needed dinner."**

What an absolute BOSS mom. One second resisting intimidation from some thugs...and then immediately thinking about getting dinner on the table for her kids. That's a real one.

So that's his mom- now- here's what he says about how she did it.

"I don't know how my mom was so unstoppable despite all that stuff happening. I dunno. Maybe it's anticipation. Hope.

The anticipation that the God who listens in love will one day speak justice.

The hope that some final fantasy will come to pass that will make everything sad untrue.

Un-painful.

That across rivers of sewage and blood will be a field of yellow flowers blooming. You can get lost there and still be unafraid. No one will chase you off of it. Its yours. A father who loves you planted it for you. A mother who loves you watered it. And maybe there are other people there, but they are all kind. Or better than that, they are right with with each other. They treat each other right. If you have that, maybe you keep moving forward.

Imagine you're in a refugee camp and you know it'll be a year or more before anything happens. Its going to be a tough year. But for the person who thinks "At the end of this year, I'm going somewhere to be free, a place without secret police, free to believe whatever I want and teach my children." And you believe it'll be hard, but eventually, you'll build a whole new life — that's like winning the lottery. It's like saying you'll get one hundred million dollars at the end of the year.

But if you're thinking every place is the same, and there will always be people who abuse you, ...the sadness overtakes you.

Here's the thing, you'll both have the same year at [the refugee camp]. But one of you will be looking around with joy and anticipation, wondering what you can do to prepare your kids for the the new world. And the other will be slumped in the courtyard, surrendered to the idea that its all one long river of blood.

What you believe about the future will change how you live in the present.

That's how she did it."

Title Slide- "That's How Mom Did It: The Gritty Endurance of Hidden Pillars"- Luke 8:1-21

Pillars and parents have a lot in common. In fact, the calling to be a parent is a calling to be a Pillar

The word "Parent" means "to Bring Forth". A Pillar is a sacrificial leader who- through Grit and a quiet strength- gives their life to make a space for life and flourishing for others.

There is something true for all of us- as parents...but also as pillars- what we're called to do in the lives of other people. Your presence and perseverance in people's lives matters. Even when it feels unseen or you feel misunderstood.

In the passage today in Luke's gospel, we're going to get some examples of this kind of leadership- from women like Sima, Daniel's mother- and in the middle- of those stories from Jesus that show us the hidden strength of these women.

Luke 8:1-21

Afterward he was traveling from one town and village to another, preaching and telling the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary, called Magdalene (seven demons had come out of her); 3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; Susanna; and many others who were supporting them from their possessions.

4 As a large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from every town, he said in a parable, 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some seed fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the sky devoured it. 6 Other seed fell on the rock; when it grew up, it withered away, since it lacked moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns; the thorns grew up with it and choked it. 8 Still other seed fell on good ground; when it grew up, it produced fruit: a hundred times what was sown." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen."

9 Then his disciples asked him, "What does this parable mean?" 10 So he said, "The secrets of the kingdom of God have been given for you to know, but to the rest it is in parables, so that

Looking they may not see,

and hearing they may not understand.

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. 12 The seed along the path are those who have heard and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And the seed on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy. Having no root, these believe for a while and fall away in a time of testing. 14 As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and produce no mature fruit. 15 But the seed in the good ground — these are the ones who, having heard the word with an honest and good heart, hold on to it and by enduring, produce fruit.

16 "No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a basket or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand so that those who come in may see its light. 17 For nothing is concealed that won't be revealed, and nothing hidden that won't be made known and brought to light. 18 Therefore take care how you listen. For whoever has, more will be given to him; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him."

19 Then his mother and brothers came to him, but they could not meet with him because of the crowd. 20 He was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you."

21 But he replied to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear and do the word of God.”

Transition: Lets look at 2 points that come out of this passage about what God calls us to be as people who invest in the lives of others to bring out something beautiful as we follow Jesus.

1) Pillars are rooted; often hidden & misunderstood.

Talk about women in passage.

Luke loves the ladies. (Starts with women- Elizabeth, Mary, Anna)

Ends with women discovering that Jesus’ tomb is empty- and they are the ones who report the resurrection to the other disciples.

In fact its some of the women in this passage in Luke 8- Mary Magdalene and Joanna.

When all the other disciples ran away in fear- these women stayed with Jesus through his crucifixion and then made sure he was properly buried and came back to attend to his body on that Easter Sunday morning.

ON easter- we finished chapter 7- talked about the woman of the City- who was forgiven and loved by Jesus and so she loved and worshipped him.

And then that leads right into chapter 8 with more talk about the women that followed Jesus as disciples.

So why is Luke doing this?

He particularly has a focus in his gospel on the upside down nature of the kingdom of God. Called the great reversal...first will be last and last will be first.

Women did not have high places in this culture- Yet- Jesus made a place for them among his disciples and God used them in an extraordinary way in his plan to save the world.

8:2-3

First notice the “hiddenness” of these women

Joanna and Susanna- obscure

Susanna- we know nothing else about her...only mentioned here

Joanna- notice the hidden unexpected power she wields- THE GREAT HEROD doesn’t even know that through the wife of his treasurer- he is funding the ministry of Jesus.

8:21

Then at the end of what we read today- is Mary, Jesus mother. In what to me feels like a very anti-mothers day passage.

Mom shows up to see her son just as his following is growing- and seemingly- like a celebrity with too much to do- Jesus seems to brush her away?

For some reason- I've always read this passage negatively.

But it's not, necessarily

Yes- on one hand- it is certainly Jesus re-prioritizing the family of God over those who are in our family tree.

But it's also pointing to his mother as an example of someone who HAS heard the word of God and obeyed it.

Luke 1:38

Mary says to the angel Gabriel- "I am the Lord's servant."

Jesus' mother is an example of someone hidden- behind the scenes- often forgotten about- who birthed Jesus- raised him- and was there with him all the way to the cross.

She is a quiet, background pillar of Jesus' life- and it all started with being called into the very difficult and isolating work of becoming a pregnant teenager- then an immigrant mother on the run from the government fleeing to Egypt. Talk about hidden and misunderstood. Even her husband thought that she had cheated on him- meanwhile she was obeying the LORD.

And you know what- we don't even really get the details of that story. Its background. Its unseen. But it is crucial in keeping Jesus alive and in fulfilling the prophecies about his life.

Back to 1)

And just like for Mary- Just like for the women who followed Jesus, listened to his teaching, and remained with him through the cross and became the very first evangelists proclaiming the resurrection- What makes us strong- even in the hidden and ignored places of life- is hearing and obeying the word of God.

This is what ROOTS us.

Think of a tree- ROOTS- unseen- dirty- unglamorous.

Flowers and fruit and leaves- beautiful. But the roots day after day- season after season have to keep growing- going deeper when nobody notices them.

Jesus tells this parable of the sower.

And when his disciples ask him what it means...

8:10

He tells them that the kingdom of God is hidden. It comes in secret. and that Jesus speaks in confusing parables in order to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah- who said "People are going to hear the messiah- but not understand. They will look at him- but not SEE him."

In other words- the messiah- God himself- will be right in front of their faces- but because he won't say the things they want him to say- or act the way they want him to act- they won't really understand him.

Isaiah himself- his whole career as a prophet was being misunderstood.

Isaiah 6:9-10

9 And he replied:

Go! Say to these people:

Keep listening, but do not understand;

keep looking, but do not perceive.

10 Make the minds of these people dull;

deafen their ears and blind their eyes;

otherwise they might see with their eyes

and hear with their ears,

understand with their minds,

turn back, and be healed.

Can you imagine?

Being called by God in a spectacular awe-inspiring, fall on your face and worship vision to carry God's message to the world- and then being told no one is going to listen to what you say or understand what you are doing.

That is character and integrity.

Isaiah had to live for something unseen. covered up. In the dirt.

Something that would last beyond his lifetime- not that made him an attractive celebrity in the moment.

Something that would ultimately bring flourishing to the people of God- even though it seemed he was just a harbinger of bad news.

That takes guts. That takes strength. That takes what Sima had with Daniel, and Mary had with Jesus. It takes the ability to look beyond a current circumstance and see something worth persevering for.

8:5-7

Notice in Jesus' parable of the sower— the problem with all the soil where the seed doesn't grow up and produce fruit is...lack of root.

On a path- the ground is too hard for the seed to sink in- so it just gets trampled on and the birds eat it. Then there is seed that falls on a rock- and it can't put roots down to get moisture- and then there's seed that falls among thorns- and thorns are very superficial plants that grow and die fast- so they don't give other plants time to grow before they choke them out. No time to be rooted.

The problem is a lack of roots. Something is preventing the seed from going deep.

Jesus- deserted places.

So important for him in his life to reconnect with the Father. It was hidden. Unseen. While he was there he wasn't doing all the spectacular things that the crowds wanted. He wasn't up on a platform.

He was being with his Father. Praying. meditating on the word of God that he would also pray on the cross. From the Psalms.

He was deepening his roots- even when people were demanding that he come heal more people- show them another sign- many walking away- misunderstanding him. Talking bad about him.

8:16-17

We often think about this verse about light under a basket- like its talked about in Matthew's gospel- let your light shine before men so that they see your good works and glorify God.

...and that meaning is there for sure.

But notice in Luke's gospel that the emphasis in this context isn't on a person actively hiding the light of God's word in them...rather its passive. Its something they can't control.

Jesus is encouraging his listeners that when you are obeying God's word- when you are following his call- like Isaiah- like these women- like Mary- it may seem hidden and misunderstood...but don't quit. All light will be revealed. The hidden obedience will be made known- and the misunderstood love will be revealed.

Back to 1)

First to moms- all the changed diapers the background stuff that often our society ignores or pretends like its not worth something- this is a deep and high calling...

and for all of us- Leading as a pillar in the Kingdom of God will undoubtedly bring seasons where you are hidden and misunderstood.

SO YOU MUST BE ROOTED IN YOUR RELATIOINSHIP WITH GOD.

Disciplined in reading and obeying Scripture.

PILLARS PRAY TO CULTIVATE.

8:15

Honest- Heart- Kalos- can be observed externally- correspond to fruit and light
Good- Agathos- Correspond to secret, behind the scenes inner beauty

2) A Pillar's fruit comes by endurance. (Shortcuts are often satanic.)

Luke 8:15

DEEP DEEP- goes wide wide- to planning
Pillars reproduce

THEY ENDURE- hypomene— meno- remain abide root vine attached to the vine

HYPER ROOTED- HYPOMENE

Multiplying fruit-
Overflowing light. LIGHT IS NEVER JUST FOR ITSELF

Comes from HEARING and OBEYING

HYPER ROOTED
Think of roots of trees. underground

Nothing says this like parenting

Luke 21:17-19

17 You will be hated by everyone because of my name, 18 but not a hair of your head will be lost. 19 By your endurance, gain your lives.

What gets in the way-

SATANIC SHORTCUTS (opposite of enduring)

Point out

8:12-14

Notice the Devil's activity- active temptation...
...also notice sometimes its just busyness- the idols of the world

Luke 4:3-4

Jesus- deserted place to prepare for the fruit.
EAT! It makes sense....the difference was the timing.

Light- dont coerce- noonday sun- hidden and wait.
Parent- so much waiting- so much praying

HIDDEN PILLARS

Psalms 37:5-6

**5 Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act,
6 making your righteousness shine like the dawn,
your justice like the noonday.**

HEED the light you have been given and you'll find more

Wait- the waiting- the hiddenness

Like mothers- sometimes in the background-

Hearing and keeping
Righteousness shine like the noon day sun.
Holding and enduring

Endurance is fueled by the Kingdom coming...and the King that's already here

**What do you know that keeps going?
Never distracted. Never bored. Never deterred.
Beat up and threatened, sure.
Humiliated and ignored. often.
But never never stopped.
That's right. You get it now.
My mom."**

3) Hope comes from the coming Kingdom...and the present King.

Light and Fruit- it WILL BE UNCOVERED
the FRUIT WILL COME!

Circumstances do not show what is true.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

16 Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. 18 So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Just like we are called to send our children out

Psalm 127:1-4

**Unless the Lord builds a house,
its builders labor over it in vain;
unless the Lord watches over a city,
the watchman stays alert in vain.
2 In vain you get up early and stay up late,
working hard to have enough food —
yes, he gives sleep to the one he loves.**

**3 Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord,
offspring, a reward.**

**4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons born in one's youth.**

As he sends us out to make the coming kingdom known—he is a very present king.

Matthew 28:18-20

Its not here- there is work to be done.

But he's with us in the active waiting.

I have the blessing of having had a very present and loving mother my entire life.
One of my most cherished memories may be the most practical thing I was ever taught about practicing the presence of God.

TELL 1st Grade Mrs. Clark story. (not a shortcut-0 no bailout)

Also Light- gotta wait for the reveal
Killeen TX. Cried every day. no friends. Afraid of teachers.

Isaiah 41:13

**13 For I am the Lord your God,
who holds your right hand,
who says to you, "Do not fear,
I will help you.**

Back to 3)

First- to those who celebrate today- You have a great mom. A real pillar.
To those of you are living that- thank you.

Second- to those of you who didn't have moms that endured- or its all a very complicated relationship with your mom. Too complicated to throw in a category.
and those of you who know in a lot of ways- you haven't been this kind of mom. And the guilt rushes in. Or maybe you have kids that didn't turn out to follow Jesus or even to be men and women of character...and you wonder what you could have done differently.

Third- to those who desire to be moms- but right now- it hasn't happened. I know how tough a day like today can be. I celebrate your desire to be a mom- and pray with you in that.

For every one of you- there is deep hope in the gospel of Jesus. In the story God is writing to make the world right. In the hope that Daniel and his Mom had in Jesus to remake the world.

None of your suffering is wasted in Jesus. None of the sacrifices you've made in the name of Jesus are wasted. None of what you have ever done wrong is unredeemable and or unforgivable.

Jesus- on a tree that looked bare- like it wouldn't produce- like a seed buried in the ground.

Resurrection- happens in the spring- new life. Born again. FRUIT. He is with us in between.

Keep going.

"My mom is the hero of this whole story, in case you were wondering. She always did what heroes do. The law that applied to her was the law of sacrificial love. The legend was unstoppable belief. The myth was the strongest person you have ever known. Not Hercules. Not Jean Claude van Damme could protect and love like my mom, who was our champion, and who—like Jesus— took all the damage so we wouldn't have to."