

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” - Matt 5:14-16

15 June 2023

Dear Friends,

In 1886 my grandfather was born in a small town in Iowa. His family didn't have much, not even a horse! He grew up in that town and later in life entered World War I (the big one he used to say). During that war, he lost a lot of friends and also personally lost a lung to mustard gas. After the war, he returned home and moved to Minnesota to homestead by himself. Later he moved to western Colorado and homesteaded again, by himself. If you are keeping track, that is eight pretty lonely years on his own. He was a great story teller and I used to sit by his side and ask a lot of questions. “Did you have to kill rattlesnakes on your homestead?” Yep, about 200 or so the first year. “Did you use a gun?” No, we didn't waste ammunition on snakes, I killed them with an axe. Or, how did you get that scar on your hand? He told me it was an accident from a gun and I asked him why they didn't stitch it up? Well, we didn't have a doctor so I just poured salt in it. Ouch! Tough guy. But there was a gentle and kind side to him as well. He was well loved by everyone I ever met that knew him.

After the homesteading, he moved to Boulder where he had a small farm and worked as a carpenter and married his girl from Iowa who gave birth to my mom in 1929. I mention my grandpa because I know the influence he had on my mom of being a friend to everyone, living an honest life of integrity, and looking out for the underdog. A couple days ago, we lost my mom and so many memories have flooded back into my mind. She had it tough living in the country and raising four 'boys will be boys' kind of boys. But the thing I remember most about my mom was the way she always took up for the downtrodden. Not just in her words, but in her actions. She was always working on something. You had to be pretty careful sitting down around her. She would always ask what I was doing? But her busyness was focused on people. She was always busy helping someone, almost always as a volunteer. As a small boy, I would go with her into the inner city of Denver where she worked with poor people or Boulder where she helped native American children. The bottom line is she let her light shine with her actions and showed me what compassion looked like with shoes on. The past couple of days have been rough on her sons and she will be greatly missed. It just seems weird that the person I have known the longest won't be there when I go home. And, it feels weirder still that I am now the oldest of our family. Of course my brothers would probably say “that's just in years 😊”



On my last international trip I got to spend a little time with an African friend from Zambia. He also lives a life demonstrating the principal of living out a life of compassion. He and his wife have four sons. One of his sons introduced me to his mom and called her the queen. I thought, that's nice.



*Weston – chief of staff for
Regional VP of Africa*

But then later on I learned that his brother-in-law died of Covid and had four sons which Weston and his wife adopted. Then, to top that, one of his very close friends passed away leaving four sons which they also adopted. Yeah, again with the math. That is 12 sons in his home. No wonder his eldest son referred to his mom as the queen! I guess what I am saying is that in spite of the crazy world we live in, people who know Jesus are living like that city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. Neither of these examples is a one-off situation. They show a lifestyle of living to glorify God. It is humbling to me and encouraging as well. I hope it is to you also.



The "Queen"

Next week I will return to Asia for the first time in three and a half years. I am passing through Denver and I had hoped to see my mom. Instead, I plan to spend a day with my brother who saw mom almost every day for the past ten years. He is obviously devastated and I would covet your prayers for him. He and his twin were at my mom's side when she went home to see Jesus. I have talked with them and they encouraged me to go ahead on my trip. In mid to late July, we will have a memorial for mom when everyone can come.

Please pray for my trip to Singapore and Thailand. My prayer is I will be used by Jesus to encourage our leaders there, many of whom are old friends of mine. Also, that trip is a lot of time in the cheap seats (40 hours total in the air), and I am not as young as I used to be 😊.

Thank you for journeying with us in our walk with Jesus and as we seek to serve others,

Mark & Elaine