

## S08 E02 - Unshakeable God in Unprecedented Times

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:00:00] Hello, welcome to season eight of the abiding together podcast. Abiding together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement on your journey with Jesus Christ. My name is Sr. Miriam James Heidland, and each and every week. I am joined by two of my very dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. This podcast is born out of our friendship and sharing all kinds of things together: our walk with Jesus, our insights, the lessons we are *still* learning, our joys, sorrows, tears, and laughter. And you are most welcome on the journey with us. You can find out more information about all of our episodes at [abidingtogetherpodcast.com](http://abidingtogetherpodcast.com). But for now, grab a cup of coffee, settle in, and welcome home.

Hello and welcome to the abiding together podcast. Season eight, here we are. And you know we have to say, we're going to talk today about the unshakeable God in unprecedented times. We're going to talk about the word unprecedented, but you know, I do have to say that the more things change, the more they stay the same. And we got Heather Khym up very early this morning. Poor Heather! You're looking fabulous though. Can I say that? We're so sorry.

**Heather Khym:** [00:01:18] Back to normal times with Heather's bed head and morning voice. It's so funny. I'm like I have morning voice so often, when I actually meet people during the day, they're going to be like, oh, you sound different.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:01:29] Like, cause it's not 6:00 AM. That's fine.

**Heather Khym:** [00:01:31] Cause I didn't wake up 15 minutes ago.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:01:33] I love what Matt said when we had him on the podcast, Matt Maher. Like Heather has the best NPR voice, like radio voice. It's like smooth and a little gravelly. And you know, it's just the perfect little relaxing, smooth voice.

**Heather Khym:** [00:01:46] That's because it's still dark out.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:01:48] Yes! Well we love your voice and your bed head, girl.

**Heather Khym:** [00:01:52] Thank you friends. Let's talk about the weather for a second too. I mean, we just need to reconnect with like all the old things. We were texting the other day, Sister Miriam you were like, it's 97 degrees here and Michelle's like, Oh, it's 82. And I'm like, it's 64.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:02:07] Okay It's 90 something where Sister is with 117% humidity. That is just like, that's kind of hellish. Sorry. You know.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:02:16] Well it was the heat index. That was, it's a 94 and feels like 117. But the funny thing was on the app. It said there's a wind chill of 117. Like that is not a wind chill. Y'all that's a heat index!

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:02:26] That's walking into a hot blow dryer, babe. Like that's what it is.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:02:30] So yeah, the nun melted on the front porch, it was just a blob of nun just laying there like, Oh, poor thing. She's spontaneously combusted finally.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:02:37] So sad.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:02:38] That's right it is sad. It is unprecedented. I mean, what.

**Heather Khym:** [00:02:43] Speaking of unprecedented sister.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:02:45] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Michelle, your kids are back in school, which right now for this is unprecedented. Can we just talk about that for a second? Okay.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:02:51] It is, it's kind of a weird feeling. They went off, with masks and all and plexi glasses in between their desks and temperature checks and all of this kind of stuff. So we will see, I'm just really praying for our teachers. And, um, you know, we just prayed about it. The decision and the programs and the safety precautions then. So we will see, I mean, I'm taking it week by week and just let's see what happens. But, um, you know, we are all in this together and it has really brought about a sense of community around here for all of us, because we're like, okay, this has to, all of us have to work to do this together, if this is gonna work. And so it's been good despite the hard and, you know, a lot of Holy water and a lot of vitamin C.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:03:35] Ain't nothing can't be solved through a little prayer and vitamin C - let's just put that on Instagram.

Well, we're going to talk about what a lot of people are talking about and kind of maybe if you haven't talked about it yet, you've been thinking about it, but just where is God in these times? Where is he? And so the scripture passage that we're going to use is from Psalm 62, verses one to two, the psalmist says "My soul finds rest in God alone. My salvation comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress. I will never be shaken. And we also want to include a quote from John Paul II - Pope John Paul the second, Saint John Paul the second- who says, "The cross means there is no shipwreck without hope. There is no dark without dawn and there is no storm without haven." And I'm wondering Heather, as we kind of look at those scripture passages and dive into this episode today, what are just some of your initial thoughts as we go over those things? What comes to your heart and mind as we dive into this place?

**Heather Khym:** [00:04:35] Yeah. You know, I think me, like most people we're in this time where, you know, people are like, this is unprecedented. And I saw this little meme that was like, I miss precedent times. Like I do too, a little tear comes out because, and I also, you know, like everybody. It's like having to change everything every day. It feels like, and I now hate the word pivot because although that's what we're having to do constantly, I'm like, I'm tired of this. You know, I'm tired of pivoting. I'm tired of having to change the plans all the time.

And so - myself - I've been looking to the Lord going, "Lord, like, what do we do? I just feel not very secure because I don't have any control over anything and I'm not a control freak,

but I do like to know what's going on. I do like to have at least an illusion of control, but that's been taken away. And I feel like the Lord has just been reminding me over and over again, "Heather, I am a firm foundation," like, you know, all the scriptures that we've read about God being a firm foundation about building our house, not on the sand, but on, on the rock. Like this is the time that that matters the most. And, specifically, I was thinking about the scripture where Jesus is in the boat and he's sleeping and there's this storm. And, and many of us will look at that. And that's what it may be feels like right now. Like, God, where are you? Are you just sleeping? Like, do you care? Like our life is totally in turmoil. Everything's been flipped upside down. I don't know if I have a job or I don't know where my next paycheck is coming from. I don't know what to do with my kids. And there's a lot of fear around it and I feel like Jesus is just saying, "I want you to learn from me. Learn from me, why I was sleeping. I'm trying to show you my trust in the father that I had an absolute abandoned heart and trust in the Father. That even if there's a storm, I'm going to be okay." And, and the Lord has just been gently saying like, "This is the trust that I want, that I want to build with you that I want you to have in me. You know? So that's some of my initial thoughts. How about you?"

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:06:30] I agree with you. This actually scripture passage from the Psalm was one of my profession quotes that I put on my prayer card from when I made my vows. And that reality of- that our soul finding rest in God alone, and that He is sovereign and that no matter what happens, that He is in control that this is not catching him off guard. And I really appreciate that quote from Saint John Paul the second as well, where he talks about "there is no shipwreck without hope," and this is the continual Pascal mystery. I was just having a conversation with a friend of mine about that just the other day of the continual dying and rising. And the continual dying and rising *and* the continual dying and rising right. Where it's like, Oh, here we are again at the foot of the cross. And now I'm on the cross. Now I'm dying and now I'm rising. That is the, I think all of us want to kind of, to kind of, it's kind of a cliché, but kind of get to a state of quote unquote Nirvana, right. Where I don't, I don't have to suffer and die anymore. And I don't have to have faith because I just know everything and I have everything together and then I'm impervious to anything that will affect me. And that isn't life, that isn't Christianity, that isn't the call on our hearts. And so. I think to continue in these times to choose to stand at the foot of the cross and to choose and just to continue to surrender.

I just find myself surrendering throughout the day, every single day, Lord, I surrender this to you. I surrender this to you. You are, you are Lord, you are sovereign, and I need you to take care of this and that continual reality. Because the truth is, even though it's probably more obvious now than it was... none of us ever had anything figured out.

**Heather Khym:** [00:07:56] I know it's stripped away all our illusions, didn't it? I'm like, wow, we're incredibly fragile and vulnerable all the time. And we didn't want to realize that.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:08:06] It's so true because it gave us this illusion of control of where we are and who we are and and it's just so great. And I'm like thank the Lord. Thank God. Thank God so many things have been stripped away where we can see the truth of who you are and to choose to worship you and to give thanks and to cling to you, to cleave, you know, like as a man and a wife, cling to one another, that we are cleaving to the Lord. We're clinging to him because he's our first love and without him, you know, without him we can do nothing. Without Him, we can do nothing. So...

**Heather Khym:** [00:08:36] and that's a choice, right? Like either we cling to God, some of us aren't clinging to God, we're clinging to Netflix or we're clinging to a bottle of gin or we're clinging to what, ourselves, you know, and that's a normal reaction. Like we're looking for something to grab onto. And, and I know for me, like I'm grabbing on to various things throughout my day and I have to make a decision, you know, I have to make a decision. Like, Lord, okay. I need to stop in the middle of my day and go, I choose you, Jesus. Like I choose you. I'm not going to choose these other things because we do have a choice and our choice right now, it really matters. And to be aware of what is happening within our hearts, because we can be swept away by all the waves that are crashing up against us many, many times a day. So the power of choosing the right path and choosing the Lord has been really, really important for me during this time. What are you thinking, Michelle?

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:09:30] Yeah, I think it exposes where our root system is. I think it exposes the areas that we're not abiding. You know, where we're not completely rooted in him. I was telling the people that support us, like on Patreon, on my Patreon video for August, it was interesting because the Gulf Coast prepared for the two hurricanes that were coming. And there was this really cool little video called *Think Like a Tree* and they were talking about the big Live Oak trees. And if you ever seen my house, I have a huge one. That's in my house. I mean, that covers my house, but they were talking about in Katrina, New Orleans only lost seven of those live Oak trees. Because they were talking about their root systems that they go so far down, that the root system is even longer and deeper and wider than the branches that you see. But also that their roots are intertwined with other tree's roots. So in that intertwined when the storms and winds come like that they don't get blown over. And so it just really stuck out to me, like where are my roots system intertwined with the Lord where it's so rooted in him when the winds come that I will not be shaken. Like it tells us in scripture, we will not be shaken when the winds come, when the storm has come. But, and then where am I inviting community in? Like, because we cannot do this alone. And I think one of the things that's so hard about COVID is the isolation, because we are made for communion and we're made for connection. So we are going to have to be really creative and to see how we are able to do that connection and that communion with other people, because it is how we are made and it's so unnatural not to be connected to people fully. So it just really seeking the Holy Spirit's wisdom in that like, okay, how do we become connected Lord, deeper with you, and then deeper with other people so that our roots can go really deep when the winds come?

**Heather Khym:** [00:11:19] Yeah. And I understand that whole thing about isolation. Like we're in a situation we live with my parents. My mom has a lung disease. We're being very, very, very, very, very cautious because of the dynamic that we have here. And we want to protect my parents and all of that. So we have been so cautious and have hardly seen anybody. And I hit a point a couple months ago where I was like, I can't live like this. Like I really, really can't live like this. And so what you're saying, and we've had to be creative about how to get together with people, because we can't just shut down and try to ride this out, you know? And, and really it's like that with any storm to just shut down and ride it out and sorta like, hold on for dear life and white knuckle it like, this is not how the Lord has meant us to live. At any time, you know, he's meant for us to live in the middle of the storms and not be afraid. And so being creative about that is I think actually it's like a really practical and essential thing to do.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:12:12] Oh no, that's so great. And I, if I can go back to the scripture passage, Heather, that you talked about, that Jesus is asleep in the boat. And that was the one that, you know, Pope Francis when he was in the Vatican square, that lonely rainy night that he spoke about. And. I remember it, Fr. Dave Pivonka this summer I was at a Steubenville event, and he was talking about the difference between solitude and isolation. And he talked about - it was so good - he talked about solitude being alone with God, but in communion with God, whereas isolation is being cut off from communion. And I was thinking of, even now, Heather, that you're talking about that scene of Jesus in the boat, the disciples are afraid, but they're, they're really literally alone with God. They are not in a boat by themselves. And I think that's the lie that the enemy speaks to us in various shades is that you are alone in a boat by yourself and the waves are crashing in on you. And there is no hope. So you better figure out what you're going to do because you have to save yourself. And it brings out these tremendous areas of vulnerability in our hearts. And the truth is that no matter what storm we are in that we can choose that solitude - that area that John Paul the second talks about original solitude of Adam and Eve alone before God knowing that they, that they received their identity from him, because it always goes back to who we are and even into him. To really be honest about the fear and what we're wanting to grasp at or what the temptations are and not to be ashamed of those things, to name those to the Lord. And then to ask the Lord to speak to us, even if he speaks to us in his sleep, that he is, he's not leaving. And that's such a great, I love that you brought that to the fore of our hearts because that's such a great visual image of no matter what, whether the Lord is sleeping or not, he's in our boat, we're in his boat actually that's more apropos and that he's in control. And you know, this too shall pass it. It can't last forever.

**Heather Khym:** [00:13:55] Amen. I remember reading this scripture, you know, about how Jesus lives, God lives in us. And I was like, Oh yeah, okay. I've heard that a million times. But there was one day that that scripture came up and it just, it was like the Holy spirit, just breathed it right into the very depths of my heart. And I, I sort of stopped like stunned. I was like, okay, wait, if you're living in me, like all the time, like then I'm never actually ever alone, like never like never, ever. And sitting with that for a long time. I would just lay in my bed sort of with my hands on my heart and just ponder that deep truth. Like Jesus, you're living in me, this mysterious truth that you are living in me and he's living in all of us. Like there's nothing that, that you have done that is going to make God just like disappear and not be around you. He is close to the brokenhearted. He's close to the sinner. He's close to the vulnerable, the poor, the poor in spirit. Like he is all about us right now. Like, because I think all of us feel lowly. All of us feel vulnerable in whatever situation that we're in. Even if, you know, we were trying to blow this off, like this isn't a big deal. It is a big deal. It's a big deal for everybody in a variety of ways because the world has changed.

So yeah, I think that that taking some of those things that we've heard and taking it past our ears and letting it seep deeply into our hearts is going to be the game changer for right now. Is Jesus really the firm foundation that we have built our life on? And if it's not, you know, there's never a better time than right now to begin the building process. And he's going to be right there helping you build it. And, and I think this is a good time for us to reconsider. You know, where we find our strength, where we find our peace. And like I said earlier, you know, we have the power of our choice that God gave us this beautiful decision that we can make. And even when we screw up, we can make it again.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:15:48] Yeah, absolutely. And I think also I was talking to my friend and she is of the Jewish faith the other day. And, uh, we ran into each other at the parking lot at this health food store that has a lot of kosher things for her. So we're literally talking mask to mask across the parking lot. It was pretty funny, but anyway, so we got closer. And we were trying to still talk with one another, but I said, how are you doing with all of this? Cause she has a lot of children also. And she said, I'm teaching my children, the beauty of lamenting. And I thought this was such an interesting thing.

And she said, I said, so tell me what you mean by lament. She said, you weep with those that weep, you know, you have sorrow with those that have sorrow, but she said, you don't ignore that the mountain is there and that it is hard, but you're still climbing the mountain, but you name it. You know, and you express it and you put words to it and you grieve it.

And, you know, she said, if we bring it, like she was using the Hebrew term, we bring it to Adonai, or we bring it to, you know, she's saying Jehovah Gyra to be the provider for our hearts. And it was such a beautiful, just like it was such a blessing to me, our conversation. It's okay and it's necessary, but she said, it's good and holy work to learn how to lament. And to learn how to put words to what is going on in our heart, and then offering them to the Lord. And then you continue on the journey. You know, you don't do it like really quickly. Like let's just name it and get over it. You do it. You bring your heart, you bring your sorrow, you bring it as an offering for the Lord to therefore transform it. And I think one of the things the Lord's has been really working on me is like, you need to really bring to me and put words to it - the things that are breaking your heart or the things that are hard. And especially important for us to walk our children through that. Okay. Tell me, what's hard about the season, you know, and all of that. And because I don't think until we put those things on the altar until we surrender those and allow for the Lord to transform them and sometimes allow them to die, the Lord, can't resurrect hope in us. And I think that's what He wants to do in this season - is resurrect hope in us. You know, and I mean, sister Miriam, I put it on my letter board, you know, it's a quote from Pope Benedict, the one who has hope lives differently. And I think that is like one of the battle cries of the church in this season, you know, Are we people of hope? Do we have a firm foundation of God, we serve a Prince of peace. He never leaves us. He will never abandon us. He will not forsake us. He gets the final victory. We know who wins in the end, but does our theology affect our everyday reality and the way *we live*, you know, preaching to myself here.

**Heather Khym:** [00:18:22] Well, many of us live as practical atheists, you know, it's like in the everyday moments we live as if God doesn't exist, as if he isn't trustworthy as if he doesn't have everything in the palm of his hand. And, you know, there's a part of that that's like, well, that could sound kind of harsh. You know, we'll be tender with ourselves, but we need to be honest with ourselves, you know. Do I really believe that God is who he says he is? And if I don't like, you know, friends, I pray for the gift of faith all the time. Like, it's not like I walk around through my day, like, "Hey man, Jesus, like, let's go!" like, I mean, there's moments when I do, but there's a lot of times where I feel like really low and really weary. And I'm like, God, like I just need more faith. Like I don't, I don't have everything that I need. I can't muster everything up on my own and I'm not meant to, you know, so God has even faith as a gift for us that he wants to give us.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:19:12] Oh, I love this. And I, you know, there's a whole book of lamentations in the Bible.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:19:15] Yes! It is a book in the Bible.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:19:17] I mean, we're, I think we're so afraid, we're so afraid of that. We are so afraid of that part of our hearts sometimes that is such a vulnerable place where we have deep disappointments and deep grief. Oh, somebody put on social media today, a quote from Henri Nouwen and it said something to the effect of most of our prayers actually grief poured out, you know. And that grief like grief of the, of what I'd hoped for, what I thought would happen. What, and, you know, I, gosh, I just think we're so. We're just so afraid of that part of our hearts. And we're afraid to be rejected there. We're afraid to be seen there because people have told us in the past get over it. Or why are you coming in complaining about that? That I think many times we're afraid the Lord is going to be disappointed in us that he's going to say like buck up little camper, you know? And I just had an experience recently where, where, Oh, gosh, there was a part of my heart that I saw that in. And I, I did not. I have been bucking up very well. And there was this part of my heart where I just had to go to Jesus, like Jesus, I don't like this, this is really hard. And right now I feel ashamed of that because I, it's a tender part of my heart, but I just want say it to you, Jesus. Like, I don't like what's happening. And it was just such a tender place to be received by the Lord there. Just to finally be like this, I just, this is so hard, you know, this situation in my life. And it was, I'm like, Oh, the continual heart of the bridegroom for us who is so receptive. And just so kind, you know, and it was just so good. It was so good to finally just go to and be like, yeah, this is, this is the truth. And when we do that and allow it just to continue to pour forth and just allow the Lord to sort it out and to see it, it does like Heather, like you both are saying that it does bring a resurrection of hope and it does, it does bring a record for just naming it at times and opening that up to the Lord and to people that love us say. I think that, that it does bring a resurrection of hope because we're not in it alone. And the Lord looks at us. He's like, I understand. I understand, like at that, you know, so definitely I'm so glad we're having this conversation.

**Heather Khym:** [00:21:24] Yeah. Lamenting is different than wallowing, right? Like what you were saying, Michelle, your disposition is totally oriented towards the Lord. And I have someone in my life who is wonderful at looking on the bright side. They're like a bright side person, like, well, you know, it could be worse. Oh, first world problems. Like it's always like that kind of thing. But there was part of that, that I was like, feeling like. Wow, is there a moment where we just need to say, "I don't like this." Like you were saying sister, like, I don't want to look on the bright side. I've had that feeling several times this summer. I'm like, wait, I don't want to look on the bright side right now. I just want to be upset about this or mad about this or whatever, but in a different way, like not to wallow, not to just sit in it for the sake of sitting in it, but to orient ourselves towards the Lord. And say, my heart is really broken over this, or I'm really hurting over this. And it's okay to feel that it's okay to not like instantly look on the bright side. I think you can hold both at the same time, the hope that it will get better. And also the sorrow of what is being lost at the time. Like this is what it means to truly be human. And I think. We get scared of those deep feelings. It's like, well, if I let myself feel the grief, will it stop? Like maybe I'm going to unravel something that I won't be able to put a lid on. And that's why, like, I always have said, like, when we go into grief and pain or into our wounds, we have to hold the hands of the Lord, like the Holy spirit and Jesus and the Father. And have them there with us when we go into the pain. If we try to go in there alone, Yes, we're going to get taken out. We're going to get wiped out by that big wave that's going to crash against us, but if we're holding the hands of the Trinity, we're not going

to be washed away. And, and I think that's really important. And even to grab the hands of saints that are important to us, to literally in our prayer, like visualize them with us as we look at the pain and the sorrow. To visualize the Lord, to visualize our Lady there with us holding our hands. Like we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. And especially in times where we feel isolated, it is more important than ever that we lift our eyes above to the kingdom, like to kingdom living. What do we really believe about the kingdom? We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who are cheering us on and who are going to be praying for us. You know, we just need to ask, we just need to like open our hearts in a new way.

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:23:32] I think like that we're not alone in the journey and remembering that communion of saints and to call forth down. And I think the process of lamenting, like you were saying, Heather, like it is not ignoring reality and sticking our head in the sand either, which like you were saying, it's not like being a Pollyanna and allowing it, but it also takes work. Not like work like a drudgery work, but work to identify those places in your heart. What is the core thing? Like, do I not feel like where are those areas of control? Like, it makes me feel like I don't have control, it doesn't make me feel like You're sovereign, it doesn't make me feel like I am secure or I am safe. Just to really name those. And then when after naming it, like faith working faith saying, okay, I'm going to declare hope, even though this is what I see, I'm going declare truth, even though this is what I feel, you know, and doing the beautiful work of faith - that Holy work of you know, identifying what's in our heart. And I think also like, it really got me thinking, I was just thinking about lamenting ... about the power of beauty. I love how Pope Benedict, I think he was quoting Paul the sixth when he says "the world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair." And I really feel like this is a call of the church, like an invitation to the church for our holiness. Like we've never seen before, but also to be beauty, like to display areas of beauty, you know, I mean, I feel like this could be one of the church's finest hours. Or it could not. I think we're really at a cusp here, like where you could go either way. We are really at a fork in the road and we know that Jesus wins in the end, but, I would love for the church to rise up and be who she's created to be.

**Heather Khym:** [00:25:14] Amen. I love that. Me too, but it begins with us, right?

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:25:20] Exactly - I was just going to say that-

**Heather Khym:** [00:25:22] Go ahead.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:25:22] No, no, no, you go right ahead. I was just going to say that.

**Heather Khym:** [00:25:24] Preach it, girl. Go!

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:25:26] Yeah, just a few last comment here. And that's us like, that's the thing. And you're like, you know, so often we look at the church, I'm like, I wish they would get their act together. **People that's us!** That's that's our, this is our individual daily decisions. This is how it works. This is not a collective one decision that *those* people make. It is you and I, every single day, the thousands of decisions that we make every single day that transform us and where we live and it's, and it is true. And you know, so often Fr. Justin Brady, and we've had him on the show a couple of times, and we often talk about him when he's talks about the saints that are assigned to us. I love that, you know, and the saints that are with us, that we are not alone, and like Fr. Jacques Philippe says, you know, how,

how will I respond now? How will I respond now, Lord, help me, Lord, help me to respond. So I'm not going in either excess or defect, but that I'm in the boat with you. That I am honest about the situation my life. And I'm going to end that - what is the story I'm believing about myself? And then Jesus, tell me the truth so I can choose you. Like, and sometimes it's just looking at Jesus saying help me just to choose you, help me to look at you, help me to see your gaze because you are unshakable. You are not going anywhere. You are the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. All time belongs to you, and you are Lord, and you are savior and you love us. And that is the truth. That is the truth. No matter what, that is the truth. Right. And he's calling us to a love that never ends. Yeah.

**Heather Khym:** [00:26:43] And there are people that are looking to us, like there's people looking to each other of us right now, like wondering what do I do? You know, we are a model for someone. There are people who we are discipling or who are, you know, maybe it's our children. I've realized that like, it's, it's very. Yeah, it's a big responsibility in some ways, but not one that I need to be crushed by - one that I need to be held accountable by. You know, my children are looking to me right now, even if they're not saying it going, what do we do, mom? How are we going to handle this? How do we ride through hard times? And, and you know, my daughter just taught me a lot about this whole thing we were talking about, about letting sorrow sit. I get scared sometimes. Like when my kids start expressing their sorrow, I feel within myself, I realized a fear rise up. I'm like, Oh no, they're hurting. I don't want them to hurt. Okay. Let's just make this pain go away. Even if it's an illusion, you know. Okay, let's look on the bright side, like, don't be afraid like, Oh, blah, blah. And I've had to learn to like, let them sit. And I remember when my daughter said one day, she's like, I was trying to do the, "Hey, let's look on the bright side". She's like, "Can I just cry?" And I was like, "Yes, you can. Yes, you can." You know, and, and I think, in a way, like I was modeling *not* the right thing, you know, I was modeling the, "Hey buck up kid, like, let's go, like, let's do this." And, and I realized the responsibility of, I set the tone for a lot of people around me. And so the choices that I make, like what you're saying, sister, about the church and *we are* the church and the decisions that we make matter. They matter not just for us, they matter for all those that God has entrusted to you. Yes. And I even feel like, you know, when we get together with people, we can say like, let's rise up together. You know, let's do this *together*. Yeah. There, there are many people listening to the podcast in groups. Right now you have a small group of men or women who you're meeting with. These are the conversations that I hope you have with, with one another. Like how can we make a decision to build our life on the firm foundation, where we can hold, where we can lament and hold hope at the same time where we can be who the church is meant to be that's us. So please have those conversations so that they spark, you know, a new way of living.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:28:50] Michelle, any last words here, friend?

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:28:53] Nope. You know, like I don't have it. I just don't have it.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:29:01] No, it's so good. It's also good. There's so much here as always, you know?

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:29:04] Yeah. I just want to be one of those ones that live differently and it's been a real challenge and it has been- this has probably been one of the most growing seasons of my life, but I wouldn't like, I'm not enjoying it. Don't get me wrong- everything's great. But I mean, I don't know about you, but yeah, I don't grow in

comfortable. I grow in hard, you know, and it's kind of like what Benedict says, but Benedict, you know, we are made for greatness, not comfort and comfort is a huge idol for me. So the Lord just really showing me like, okay, you know, this is an area of growth. This is very fertile ground for the Lord to grow, you know, grow each and every one of us. So, yeah.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:29:48] Amen. Amen. So whether you are listening just with you in the Lord or you're listening in a group, we just want to invite you to take some of these questions to heart and to, to have, to whatever degree you can is to have really honest and open conversations with people. And what are you lamenting? What, what is the Lord needing to speak into in your life? Where, where do you see that? You know, You placed your hope in something else? Cause we are, that's the journey of life. I'm like, okay Lord, I did this and it helped me here. And so just allowing those places to grow deeply so that our roots grow deep as the Heather or Michelle gave us the analogy of the tree so that our roots become intertwined in good and holy things and that life pours forth. Because that's what we're ordered to - we are ordered toward the God of life who lives forever. And he was calling us into communion in every single place with him. So. So maybe we could dive into our one things. So Heather, would you like to share your one thing with our listeners this week, dear?

**Heather Khym:** [00:30:42] Sure, there's a song by Hillsong. It's an older song called "I Surrender," which I love, but there's a new version of it where Lauren Daigle is partnering with them and there's a video of them singing. It's so powerful. I love her voice. Oh, my goodness. She has something. So anyway, that video and song, and I'll put it in the show notes, which you can find on our website- [abidingtogetherpodcast.com](http://abidingtogetherpodcast.com). That's where you can find the show notes. We're going to have transcripts of all the episodes now. Yay. For all the people who wanted them- that's a big deal. So you can find all kinds of things on our website under each show. So Michelle, what's your one thing?

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:31:18] Your four one things, what's your four things?

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:31:21] It's just two! Seriously. Mine is a beautiful Marian consecration that I am doing right now by Christine Watkins. And it's based on the beautiful stars on Mary's tilma from Our Lady of Guadalupe. And it is a virtue a day and it is stunning. It is probably one of most beautiful. I love her language, it's very poetic. And so of course I really love it. And then my children have one. It is a book that is coming out. It's a children's Marian consecration. Oh, wow. And it, it is stunning. It is beautiful. And it is stunning and the artwork and the language and my kiddos are absolutely loving it. I got an advanced copy of it. It is just breathtaking.

**Heather Khym:** [00:32:03] What's that one called?

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:32:04] It is a children's consecration to Mary by Colleen Pressprich. And so I'll post both of them here and yeah, it's just a lovely, some of the most beautiful images of Mary and I really have loved how my children responded to it. And so, yeah, I'll post both of them there. Cause we need some Mary here, people. Oh, and then sister, what about you?

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:32:26] Well, my one thing really is about Heather Khym and, uh, Heather Khym finally had her swimming pool finished, and I just wanted to give you shout out Heather, and you don't have to send the picture to everybody, but you sent us a

picture yesterday of your first foray into your pool. And I just am so happy for you. I had just rejoiced with you. And I know that's been a deep desire of your heart for a long time and I, I just am. So it just made me smile to see your family finally in it and it's just beautiful, seeing your house is so lovely. So I'm just grateful for you. And I'm grateful that the Lord finished that and you get to enjoy that! You deserve that!

**Heather Khym:** [00:33:02] Me too friend, me too!

**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:33:02] And People, this woman *lamented* and the Lord resurrected hope. That is some resurrected hope.

**Heather Khym:** [00:33:06] I was also just straight up ticked off most of the time, but now we're good. We're good. We're good Lord. Back in with you. Amen. Thank you friends.

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:33:15] Oh yeah. All good things. All good things. Well, God bless you, dear friends. And thank you for joining this week. And just to, just to remind you that you're deeply loved and that the Lord will never leave you, nor forsake you. He is with you in all things. So until next week we will be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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**Michelle Benzinger:** [00:35:11] Thank you

**Sr. Miriam James Heidland:** [00:35:12] and God bless you.