

THE ULTIMATE GIFT

23rd October 2021

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WEEK 8 - DREAMS

Blurb:

Dreamers are often thought to be under achievers and a distraction to people of action.

Yet dreaming is a very real part of being human, connects us to the divine, and is the root of hope and faith.

Join us as we unwrap another layer of the Ultimate Gift!

Daniel 2: 20-23

Then Daniel praised the God of heaven ²⁰and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

²¹He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.

He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

²²He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

²³I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

Sermon

When speaking of dreams we have to be very careful what we hear... there are dreams that sound more like life-goals. Similar to a child saying I want to be an astronaut when I'm big. Or an adult dreaming of, then planning for, financial independence... Then there are dreams that float through our minds when we are asleep or perhaps you are like me, I was the kid looking out of the window thinking of wonderful and marvelous things, while I should have been learning maths! As adults day dreams can appear when we are very relaxed. As we unwrap another level of the ultimate gift what is it that we can learn?

Firstly, I think we need to embrace our ability to dream, this is so much more than having pictures float through your mind. Dreaming offers us a window into what could be, a hopeful look into the future imagining our best selves achieving great things. A famous example is Walt Disney planning his next big project, with story boards hanging above the bed, planning and dreaming even in his final moments. He died with those story boards incomplete.... Dreams are the fuel of imagination; I believe our creative expression draws us closer to God.

Biblical personalities are very familiar with dreams as visions of the future...Jacob, Joseph, and Daniel all had encounters with God through dreams. Of course both Daniel and Joseph were better known for their skilled interpretations of dreams. So we know that even the Pharaoh of the time and Nebuchadnezzar also had significant dreams through which God spoke to them. The other Joseph, Jesus' earthly dad had three very important dreams all recorded in early Matthew. The angel telling him to go ahead and marry Mary, in spite of her pregnancy; and later to take Mary and Jesus south to Egypt, to avoid the slaughter of the innocents ordered by jealous Herod, and the third telling him it was safe to return to Nazareth. All in all, dreams in scripture seem to happen in the space between conscious functioning thought and the inner self where God speaks. Offering information that the dreamer would otherwise not have access to, a scriptural key is that the information given in a dream was taken seriously and obeyed. Yet somehow, we allow ourselves to become jaded, as we get older, we succumb to the hard knocks and bury our dreams.

As followers of Jesus today, is it okay for us to have vivid dreams? The short answer is yes, absolutely. The long answer involves an examination of hope. The prophet Joel tells us that big dreams the result of an outpouring of the spirit, specifically after a time of repentance: 2: 28 'and afterward, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions.' We know that hope drives our faith relationship with Jesus as we talk with God in prayer. We also express a profound hope as look forward to his coming again in glory. Our hearts long for the day when all shall be made whole, the victory complete and time will be irrelevant. However, I would not recommend dreaming scenes from Revelation, but answers to prayer might come to us in our dreams while we are sleeping.

So what is it that we have found under the wrapper this week?

We all face the temptation to pursue our dreams, call it a vision, and then ask God to bless it. However, God's vision for our lives should be the heartbeat that pumps through everything we do; let's never forget that discovering God's plan begins with listening. Discovering who God created you to be and what God is shaping you to do is not a one-time event. God reveals his vision to us over time. As you respond to what God shows you in your dreams you can begin to live into God's preferred future for you and the community around you.

So don't be afraid to dream, so long as you are willing to listen, act on what you hear, and continue to move toward the life you are called to live!