

Where Dreams Can Lead

Sunday Morning, May 7, 2017

“...creative people have credited dreams for their discoveries. French chemist Auguste Kekule saw snakes biting their tails in a dream before he stumbled onto the mystery of the correct ring structure for the benzene molecule. Inventor Elias Howe attributed the discovery of the sewing machine to a nightmare of being captured by cannibals. Howe noticed the holes at the tip of the natives’ spears and designed the sewing machine accordingly. Vladimir Horowitz and other well-known pianists have described playing piano pieces or discovering a new fingering in their dreams that turned out to work perfectly. Robert Louis Stevenson said that his book “The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” came to him in a dream.” www.britannica.com/magazine/dreams

One of the clearest evidences that God reveals His purposes through people is found in the story of Joseph, Jacob’s son, when God revealed His plan for Joseph through two dreams. Unlike the dreams revealing insights to people that effected modern history I just read about, Joseph received two dreams that were offensive to his family, yet they were absolutely true. The problem was not only that his family was offended by the dreams, but that the purpose of them was not understood. Joseph’s father had faith in God and knew that these seemingly bazaar dreams could really be from God, so he did not totally dismiss the dreams but “...kept the matter in mind.” Let’s read this account in **(Genesis 37: 1 – 11)**

- 1 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.
- 2 This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.
- 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.
- 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

5 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

6 So he said to them, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:

7 There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.”

8 And his brothers said to him, “Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.”

10 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?”

11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

God revealed something to Joseph that he knew was true, but, how a 17 year old shepherd boy would be transformed into the man he needed to be for God to fulfill these revelations, I am sure was a mystery. Having said that, Joseph still believed they were true.

When God speaks to us in ways that reveal His purpose for our lives, our responsibility is to be faithful to God’s plan and let Him prepare us for what He wants to do with us.

As Christians God’s desire is not that we only have a close walk with Him, but that God will shape us into the person He wants us to be for His purpose for His Kingdom work. To be involved in God’s Kingdom work, we must do what Joseph did, that is, believe in God’s will for you, and follow the path God set’s for you. Look at what happened to Joseph next in Genesis 37:12 – 20.

(Genesis 37:12 – 20)

12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."

14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

15 Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!

20 Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

So Joseph set out to do what his father told him to do. Take note that Joseph did not set his focus on the dreams God revealed to him, he left that promise in God's hands. He didn't pursue it.

It was God's responsibility to carry out his plan for Joseph. It was Joseph's responsibility to do what was set before him to do.

That's why the Apostle Paul makes the following declaration in **(Philippians 3: 14–15)**:

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

The same thing that the Apostle Paul encourages us to do, he was committed to do. We, also, should be committed to this principle, if we desire to follow Christ and discover His purpose for our lives. Joseph did the same thing. He did what he knew he was supposed to do and trusted God to do the rest. We have to trust God to prepare us for His purpose.

Whenever we set out to follow in the steps God calls us to follow, we can be sure there will be things that come against us, a warfare that threatens us, but God always has the upper hand. The key to our successfully following God and staying on the path He has for us is in how we respond to the good or bad things that come our way.

If the core of our heart is to truly please God by yielding our lives to Him, we will discover our lives being in the center of His will.

Adversity comes in ways and times we don't expect. Joseph certainly did not expect that his brothers wanted to kill him by throwing him into a pit and left to die! In the unseen world of darkness, Satan seeks to devour those who follow the will of God. Turn to **(I Peter 5:8)**.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Satan was setting up his plan to destroy Joseph. Satan can work easily through jealousy and hatred, like Joseph's brothers had towards him. Now don't misunderstand, Joseph wasn't this young innocent boy, he was spoiled and favored by his father, immature and good looking. A recipe for arrogance. But he was hard working and intelligent enough to shepherd his father's sheep. God had work to do in Joseph's life, to prepare him for God's purpose. Consider these next principles as we continue in **(I Peter 5: 9 – 11)**.

(I Peter 5: 9 – 11)

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

God was allowing the upcoming adversity in Joseph's life to start the transformation work.

God will allow sufferings to perfect, establish, strengthen and settle us, too. Our focus should be that all is for His glory.

As you go through whatever adversity God allows into your life, occasionally remind yourself that the trial has been allowed for at least these two reasons:

1. To prepare us for His work.

(II Timothy 2: 20 – 21)

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

2. To transform us into the image of His Son.

(Romans 8:28 – 29)

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

In Joseph's dreams, God gave him a promise that he would reign with great authority over people. We, too, have been given the same promise. Turn to **(Ephesians 2:4 – 6)**

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4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Joseph was just under the authority of Pharaoh. We will be just under the authority of Christ!

(II Timothy 2: 12a)

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.

We shall reign, if we endure – like Joseph did!

If we endure the challenge of adversity in our lives and rely on God, then He will prepare us to reign and sit on thrones of authority with Christ our Lord!

Invitation and Lord's Supper Service

(Matthew 26: 26 – 29)

The Bread:

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

The Cup:

27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."