**Dreamers and the Dreams**

**Legend of the Dream Catcher**

I would guess most everyone has seen or even has a Dream Catcher similar to this one. But do you know the legend of the Dream Catcher.

The Ojibwa (Oh jeeb way) or Chippewa were the first Native American people to use Dream Catchers. The Chippewa believe the night is full of both good and bad dreams. When a dream catcher is hung above the place where you sleep it moves freely in the night air and catches the dreams as they drift by. The good dreams, knowing their way, pass through the opening in the center of the webbing while the bad dreams, not knowing the way, are caught in the webbing, and destroyed at the first light of the morning sun. Some tribes believe all dreams pass through, but only the good dreams slide down the feathers to those sleeping below.

When we were children, we were often frightened by our dreams. Maybe because they are full of scary monsters, or just images we didn’t understand. As adults, we still dream, but our dreams take on very different forms and meanings. Do we really understand what our dreams are trying to tell us? Sometimes yes, sometimes we have no idea.

We also daydream. These are the dreams we have while we are fully awake, but our thoughts are off somewhere else. Probably like some of you this morning. You could be making a grocery list, trying to solve a problem, or daydreaming about your ideal vacation. Daydreams allow us to fantasize about all sorts of things.

Children are great creative dreamers. They dream up new games to play, they dream of flying through the sky like superheroes. They dream up imaginary friends. Children dream of becoming firemen, astronauts, or professional athletes. They dream of doing things adults would say are impossible. We usually attribute these impossible things to imagination instead of dreams. God gives us creative abilities too, simply by giving us the capacity to dream, imagine and plan.

The scientific world has not yet come up with an answer to why we dream. Their statement is “there’s no universally accepted definition of dreaming”. Maybe they should consider it a “God thing”.

There is a very important connection between dreaming and faith. The Bible is filled with stories of dreamers and their faith. Dreamers like Abraham, like Joseph and Moses, like Ruth, and Esther and many others. A more modern-day dreamer was Martin Luther King Jr. He delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech in August 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. He was speaking to a crowd of nearly 250,000 people and millions more on television, calling for freedom, equality, and justice for **all**. He had a dream.

There are 21 dreams recorded in both the Old and New Testaments. Ten of those can be found in the Book of Genesis. One dream from the Book of Judges is about a runaway loaf of bread that destroyed an entire camp of Midianites. That sounds more like a nightmare than a dream. I know you’re trying to find this one. Look at Judges Chapter 7.

The Old Testament dreamer we are most familiar with is Joseph. The stories of his dreams, the dreams of the baker and cupbearer, the dreams of the Pharoah and Joseph’s interpretations of these dreams cover four chapters in Genesis. Here’s the short story of Joseph.

Jacob, Joseph’s father, had twelve sons and of the twelve, Joseph was his favorite. Jacob gave Joseph a very ornate robe, his coat of many colors, showing how much he loved and favored him. You could say Joseph was a bit of a spoiled brat. Jacob’s favoritism towards Joseph caused the brothers to hate him.

One night Joseph had a dream, and it went like this.

**Genesis 37:5-10 (NKJV)**

***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.*

As the story continues, Joseph goes to look for his brothers in the fields, but they’re nowhere to be found. As he is searching for them, the brothers see him coming. They are already angry over Joseph’s dreams of being ruled by their little brother.

**Genesis 37:18-20 (NKJV)**

***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!”*

As the story goes, they don’t kill him but sell him off to a caravan headed to Egypt where he is sold as a slave to a man named Potiphar, captain of Pharoah’s guard. God was with Joseph, and he prospered in Potiphar’s house. There was just that one little incident with Mrs. Potiphar that got him thrown into prison. While in prison, Joseph uses his God-given ability to interpret many dreams, including those of Pharoah. Eventually Joseph becomes second in command of Egypt. Because of his dreams, Joseph was able to save his family and is reunited with his father and brothers. It took 20 years to be reunited with his family and for his dreams to come true.

**Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)**

***20****But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

Some of the most significant dreamers come to us in the New Testament. There are five dreams that surround the birth of Christ in the first two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew. We all know this story: Joseph is betrothed to Mary. Mary conceives a child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph plans to divorce Mary quietly, but an angel of God appears to him in a dream.

**Matthew 1:20-24**

***20****But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.****21****She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[*[*f*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23166f)*] because he will save his people from their sins.”*

***22****All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:****23****“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).*

***24****When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.*

After the birth of Jesus, the dreams continue. The Magi come to visit the young Jesus. God warns them in a dream not to return to Herod the king but return to their country by another way. After the Magi had gone, an angel appeared to Joseph, again in a dream. The angel warns Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt before Herod can find them. After the death of Herod, an angel appears to Joseph once again in a dream. This time the angel gives Joseph instructions to take the child Jesus and Mary and return to Nazareth. Herod’s son is now in power, so God warns Joseph to steer clear of his territory.

One of the last dreams in the Christ story is that of the wife of Pontius Pilate. Jesus is on trial before Pilate. Pilate is trying to satisfy the crowds but finds no serious crime against Jesus. Pilate’s wife has a nightmare about Jesus’ trial. She knows Jesus is innocent and is very afraid for her husband. She warns Pilate about her dream.

**Matthew 27:19 (NKJV)**

***19****While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.”*

Strangely, her dream needed no interpretation.

The dreams of the Old Testament Joseph and Dr. King were dreams with purpose and deliverance for their people. Joseph’s dream was a dream of deliverance and pointed us to Gods redemptive power. Dr. King’s dream was one of love, equality and acceptance for all, along with deliverance for oppressed people. All dreams of deliverance originate with God, meaning they are God inspired. It isn’t always easy to understand our dreams, or what to do with them.

How do we make our dreams come true; how do we act on them?

**DREAMS TAKE TIME TO COME TRUE**. The Old Testament Joseph waited thirteen years to become the Prime Minister of Egypt. David waited fifteen years to become the king of Judah. Martin Luther King, Jr. waited ten years to see his dream begin to come true with the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Perseverance over time will bring your dream to fulfillment.

**DREAMS TAKE TESTS TO COME TRUE**. That means tests of your patience; tests of your resolve; tests that can lead you down the wrong path. It may look like you’re going in the opposite direction but have faith.

**DREAMS TAKE TEAMWORK TO COME TRUE**. Other people play a significant role in whether your dreams come true or not. A dreamer must learn how to be faithful despite how other people act. A dreamer must learn how to handle authority, how to work with other people. God will arrange for people to help us along the way.

**DREAMS TAKE TRUST TO COME TRUE**. Trust is the missing component. You must trust in the presence of God. Four different times Genesis tells us that the “Lord was with Joseph” *(Genesis 39:2-23).* Because of the Lord’s trust and Joseph’s trust in the Lord, he was successful.

Are you willing to wait for your dreams to come true? This is not an easy task, but worth it if you wait!

I recently read a book titled “Created to Dream” by Rick Warren. Rick Warren is the author of “The Purpose Driven Life” which many of us have read. From this book, Rick says:

* **Great faith inspires great dreams.**
* **Great dreams require great faith.**

**From Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)**

***6****And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

Rick Warren goes on to say there are many benefits to pursuing the dreams God has for your life:

* It gives great strength to your faith.
* It deepens your courage and builds character.
* It gives strength to your imagination as it expands your horizons and broadens your perspective.
* It can clarify your priorities, sharpen your thinking and focus your energy.
* It always, always reveals something new of the wonder and glory of God.

Dreaming is such an important part of what makes us human. We dream about our children, and grandchildren; the kind of life we want for them. We dream about our own successes, having a great job and money for retirement. We dream about our church and church family; will we continue to grow in Christ and prosper our church.

Even God dreams. Just look around at the world God dreamed up. The earth, the sky, light, dark, plants, animals; there are millions of variations to the plants and animals. All these things were the results of God’s dreams. Dreaming is always the first step God uses in his process to change your life for the better. Everything starts with a dream. Jesus is the most important dream we can relate to someone, a dream that is true and full of his saving grace.

In closing, I would like for us to read this scripture. It comes from **Jeremiah 29:11**. It’s very familiar to us, so let’s read it together.

**Jeremiah 29:11(NIV)**

***11****For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

God has a plan for your life and for mine, for the lives of our families and our friends. God has a plan for New World too. I encourage all of us to seek out the plans God has for us. God’s dream for us will be the greatest experience of our lives.

**Amen**.