

Dare to Dream

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Matthew 14:22-33

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It might not surprise you to know my husband was always in trouble in school because he was a dreamer. The teacher would be talking about something ...and Geoff would be looking out the window and in another place altogether.

I was in trouble because I liked to write fiction. Essay questions like ‘what you did on your summer holidays?’ were an open invitation to an 8-year-old to write some serious science fiction... or worse still, some deep, existentialist pondering. I wanted to be a writer but my sister said I wouldn’t be because I couldn’t spell. How easily we are crushed.

Dreams are important in our biblical literature. There are about 28 mentions of dreams or dreamers in the Old and New Testaments. This doesn’t even count visions or trances. You’ll remember some of these...

Just 2 weeks ago, we heard the story of how Jacob fell asleep on a rock and God came to him in a dream (Genesis 28). That dream changed his **whole** life! Suddenly, God was REAL! And Jacob could see His work and His workers busy in the world.¹

– and this week’s reading is how Joseph was a dreamer – and that only made his brothers hate him more. (Genesis 37:5)² He dared to dream of greatness.

Later, Joseph of another kind, was about to “quietly dismiss Mary” so as not to embarrass her about her ‘condition’ but the Lord came to him in a dream and said, ‘don’t do this. There is this amazing child coming and you will name him Jesus!’ I’m paraphrasing of course, but phew! how close what that!?! (Matthew 19:25) Better still, the angel came back in another dream to tell them to get the hell out of there and go to Egypt. (Matthew 2:13) Dreams can save your life! almost...

Pilot’s wife had a dream about Jesus and begged Pilot to put a stop to this nonsense. (Matthew 27:19) but Pilot took the coward’s way out and put it back to the people, “what should we do?” “Are you sure?” “Which one should we save?”

Many years later, Peter told the Jerusalem crowds at Pentecost about this new creation saying, “your young men will see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:14-23)

And then there is that wonderful moment when Peter realises a) Jesus is not just for Jews AND b) not only is OK to mix with gentiles but you can eat with them too. (Acts

¹ Jacob and God in a dream - Actually, it seems to have been a regular occurrence. (Gen 31:10-17)

² Lucky he didn’t want to be a writer

10). This is significant because to refuse hospitality is such a serious insult in so many cultures. It is one of those pivotal moments that allowed Christianity to begin to spread across the globe. He had a vision – a dream.

Without dreams, we'd have no prophets!³

Ok. I admit there are many things we could never dream of. Me being here – or even in Ministry is probably top of my list. I never even imagined myself married. (One of my flummoxed relatives commented to Geoff's family, "She *never* played with bride dolls." As if that was a predeterminer.)

But we all have or had dreams. That includes dreams in our hearts and dreams in our sleep. What did you want to be? What was your dream.

(pause for responses)

It is not an accident that our first nations people refer to their creation stories as dreamtime.

Psychologists and spiritual directors use dream therapy to dig deeper into our relationships with the divine and ourselves.

500 year ago, Martin Luther nailed his complaints to the church door. He imagined a church that was closer to the people, honest and just. Hundreds of years later Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr – gave us another type of dream.

Where would we be without dreamers?

Jesus believed in a spirit that acted in this world not just a set of rituals and actions that bargained with God for a better life. Jesus' dream was God incarnate – within, in action – not transactional. And we believe in Jesus for the same reasons. If I expect something out of it, I am already making the same mistake. It is not about being saved above all others but helping others to be saved.

Jesus gave us a way of imagining a world, a kingdom of peace and justice. A destination as good as a goal that gave us the courage to live in THIS world, among THIS mess and know it could be better, it will be better, some day. The gift of imagination is courage. You must dare to dream.

My Dad was a dreamer. He never imagined something he couldn't do – even though he often failed. He said he failed so much he knew all of the mistakes and indeed, he spent the 2nd part of his life teaching others how to succeed. It's no wonder I could imagine myself succeeding – eventually... and it gave me the courage to plug on; to put myself out there; to take chances; to reach for education and skills; to put my

³ Read Dr Martin Luther King Jr "I have a Dream" speech. It is breathtaking every time.

hand up; to ask and be rejected. It took even greater courage to put myself in the hands of God and say, OK, "Ministry, are you kidding?"

We don't dream alone. Jesus called us to be family, brothers and sisters in Christ; there for each other.

My sister became an editor (naturally). And recently we had a conversation about writing and I told her I never called myself a writer. She said, "Are you kidding? Of course, you are a writer. You've written books and articles, poetry and speeches and you write every week. You're a writer!"

Dreams don't always come true as we might have imagined.

So I pray:

In a world so riven with violence,

A world of grief beyond what we could have ever imagined,

your spirit still feeds our dreams. Gracious God, help us dream up better ways to deal with conflict; imagine systems to feed our hungry and open paths to conversations.

Help us hear the quiet voices and please, please!

come to us in our dreams. Amen