

## **Dragons 4:**

Matthew 15

### **Introduction:**

9 weeks ago when I was talking to the Lord about what He would have me preach, He spoke to me about Chasing Dreams and Slaying Dragons.

He spoke to me about there being people in our congregation that had stopped pursuing their dreams and he spoke to me about people who were battling dragons, inner demons and fears that were standing in the way of the dreams.

If I were to label this morning's message anything, it would be *'Slaying your Personal Dragons 101'*.

These are the 7 things God spoke to me very clearly about 9 weeks ago. These are the 7 things that Beccy and I have seen time and time again shipwreck lives.

Things that people needed to deal with.

Now some of you would have heard me touch on some of this stuff on a Wednesday pm service, so if you have, I am not preaching for redundancies purpose, but for reinforcement.

## **Our greatest enemies:**

Our greatest enemies are rarely external, they are mainly internal.

People with great dreams rarely fail because of obstacles external, but obstacles internal. These are the demons of self that we must face. Here are a number of things I have seen make or break people....depending on how they deal with them.

They are like bricks in a wall that stand between you and your future. Have you have slain these dragons? Only after you have demolished this wall will you be able to move into your future.

## **Recap:**

*Matthew 15:17-20 ESV*

*(17) Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?*

*(18) But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.*

*(19) For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.*

*(20) These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."*

In this verse Jesus was saying that what is inside of you will come out of you.

To defile means to make common.

To take something that is full of potential, and hinder it, or take it from its original purpose, by making it unclean, that is unusable.

In other words to take something that is set aside for a purpose, for something special, and make it common and no longer special by an inner attitude or an external action that is driven by an inner attitude.

Friend...you can defile your future.  
You can defile your life purpose.  
And once defiled, only the grace of God and supernatural intervention  
can restore it.

### **In week one I defined potential for you:**

**Potential** means: possible, but not yet actual.

There are two types of potential.

There is **realized** potential and there is **latent** potential.

#### **Realized Potential:**

Realized potential means that this possibility has become an  
actuality.

That what has lain dormant has manifested itself.

It has become fruit, it has matured, and it is evident.

#### **Latent Potential:**

Latent means that something is dormant, it is present but not  
expressed. It is believed to be there, but not evident.

I believe that Jesus was saying:

You make common your potential.

You defile your potential.

You retard your potential.

From the inside, not from the outside.

It is the personal dragons that we do not slay today, that will destroy  
us tomorrow.

## 1. Lack of administrative discipline.

Often when we hear the word administration or administrative we think the nasty old lady with big hair in high school. We think clerical and secretarial, but it is something that includes those terms, but is something far greater.

Administrative means:

Managerial, directional, organizational, executive.

Paul talks of the skills of administration as a God given gift.

*1 Corinthians 12:28 ESV*

*(28) And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, **administering**, and various kinds of tongues.*

The word here means to steer, to govern, to give direction, to pilot as a pilot steers a boat into harbor.

There are 3 lacks that I have seen shipwreck peoples lives and dreams, 3 simple things that if they would attend to them would ensure success, but because they don't see themselves as clerical, they refuse to discipline this area of their life.

Namely:

- Lack of planning.
- Lack of attention to detail.
- Lack of the use of a personal diary/scheduling device.

### a. Lack of planning.

A failure to plan is a plan to fail.

Lee Iacocca

*The discipline of writing something down is the first step toward making it happen.*

A vision is a dream with a plan attached.  
Without a plan, it is a fantasy at best.

With any goal, you must always start with the end in mind.

Who do you want to be?

What do you want to achieve?

And how are you going to do it?

I was talking to some guys about pulling together a group and doing a triathlon in 2011.

Training for a triathlon takes 7 months of very specific training with daily goals for everything from diet to exercise.

If we don't plan,

If we don't prepare all we have is a fantasy, not a plan, we will never obtain our dream.

You must always start with the end in mind.

### **b. Lack of attention to detail.**

Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.

Many people take the first step and stop.

People who are successful are so chiefly because they add a second step, then a third, then a fourth.

You have to know what steps you need to take and when you need to take them if you're going to get to where you want to go.

It is not just a matter of planning the steps....learn how to ride a bike.

You have to learn how to swim 750 m, ride 20km then run 5 km.

So you have to have detailed planning for each event.

You have to think through and plan every week of your training for a 7 month period.

Probably one of the easiest ways to think about this is simply that  
*Little things mean a lot.*

Have you ever seen those trucks with 'Hire me for only \$19 a day' on them? You go in there to rent them, sign the paper work, use it for 4.5 hours and bring it back to be charge \$120?

You didn't read the fine print.

\$19 was for a 4 hour day.

You had to stay within city limits or they charge \$1.20 a mile.

You had to return it with gas etc... etc.

It is the little things that make the difference.

If you have ever been to my place and been on the end of Beccy's hospitality, it is a wondrous thing.

She can take dried fruit, blue cheese, sliced meat and water crackers and turn it into a feast for kings.

Now I can through all those things on a plate and it looks like dog food.

She does it with such flair, it looks like art.

The key is in the presentation, because little things mean a lot.

Excellence is not an issue of money; it is an issue of vision.

It is the internal standard that tells you if something is acceptable whenever you hear the inner voice say...near enough is good enough; you have just stopped short of excellence.

### **c. Lack of use of a diary/scheduling device.**

I am constantly surprised at how many busy people have not disciplined their mind and their hands to use a daily scheduling tool as a habit.

A schedule for me defends me from chaos.

It defends me from the pull of the urgent taking me away from the pull of the important.

I feel like it is a net for catching days.

If I don't have one, whole days and weeks disappear for me, with one, I can catch and utilize every moment.

Annie Dillard described a schedule as-

*Scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands one section at a time.*

CS Lewis said:

*The future is something which everyone reaches at the rate of 60 minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is.*

*Ephesians 5:15-17 ESV*

*(15) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,*

*(16) making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.*

*(17) Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

It is an unwise person who does not know God's will for their life and is not daily working and walking towards it.

When Paul calls these times evil, he means they are full of trouble, temptations and distractions.

So much of life is wasted when it should be packed full.

Now I mean packed full of the important things like reading a novel, learning to swim, holding hands with your best friend.

But there is a place for all of these things and everything needs to have its place and if they are not planned it will not happen.

If you have a dream, it needs to have goals attached as to how you are going to achieve it and a schedule of when you are going to do it.

## **2. Lack of learning - I didn't say education.**

You attend an institution for an education - you turn up and attend life for learning.

Some of the people who lack the most common sense are people with a tertiary education.

They have their doctorate, their MBA's, their degree's, yet all they really did was work out of an institution stiff necked and proud.

Mark Twain said:

*A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.*

Steve Jobs didn't finish his education, neither did Bill Gates, neither did Donald Trump, but they never stopped learning.

There are countless scriptures on the value of knowledge.

*Proverbs 9:10 ESV*

*(10) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*

*Colossians 2:8 ESV*

*(8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

*Romans 12:2 ESV*

*(2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

People stop advancing in their education when they stop being teachable.

They think they have arrived, their above needing a coach.

I have a coach in ever major area of my life, fitness, leadership, flying, and writing.

These are not positional things, but relational.

### **Coaching is not counseling.**

Counseling focuses on healing issues in a person soul, often looking back at what someone has been through in life.

Coaching focus on the future and the pursuit of the life you desire to have and the person you desire to become.

### **Coaching is not consulting.**

A consultant tells you what you need to know.

A coach asks you questions you need to answer for yourself.

Most people know what they need or have access to the resources. They just don't realize it.

### **Coaching is not mentoring.**

Mentoring is helping people walk in 'my steps'.

Coaching is helping people walk in their own steps.

### **3. Lack of resolve and tenacity.**

Not seeing something through.

You have to get up, or have others drag you up and you have climb back in the ring and go one more time.

Winning and losing are different sides but have something in common, they are a habit.

It is hard to quit the first time, after that everyone will just expect it from you.

For success in life to become a reality you must agree in your family and with yourself that the price is worth it, because it will cost you. It will cost you everything you have and then some and if it doesn't work and you lose everything....you have to all agree that the plan is to pick up and go again.

*Vince Lombardi*

*The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.*

#### **Helen Keller:**

Helen Adams Keller (June 27, 1880 – June 1, 1968) was an American author, political activist, and lecturer.

She was the first deaf and blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY DOUBTED THAT Helen Keller, a temperamental deaf blind child, was capable of learning.

After seeking the advice of Alexander Graham Bell, Mrs. Keller contacted the Perkins Institution for the Blind, where she found not only a teacher qualified to teach Helen but also one who was willing to travel to rural Alabama to do so.

The teacher, Anne Sullivan, had to overcome many obstacles before she could educate the ten-year-old girl who had been allowed total freedom and had never been disciplined.

Sullivan taught the young Helen how to fingerspell, read Braille, and write.

Keller quickly became desperate for knowledge.

She eventually graduated magna cum laude from Radcliffe College, becoming the first deaf-blind person to graduate from college.

Keller could read English, French, German, Greek, and Latin in Braille.

She also learned to speak.

Keller, a life-long advocate for the disabled, became a world-renowned speaker and author, traveling to more than forty countries.

For her service, Keller received the highest civilian honor in the United States: the Presidential Medal of Freedom, just one of many awards she was given during her lifetime for her accomplishments.

Let me read you two quotes from her:

*"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience, trials and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved"*

*"It is a terrible thing to see but have no vision"*

#### **4. Lack of personal fitness.**

We all get tired fighting-  
Fighting for our families-  
Fighting for our dreams-  
Fighting for our sanctification.

And having done all to stand...still standing.

Fatigue makes cowards of us all.

Both physical and emotional fatigue will inhibit your ability to do what you need to do long term.

#### **3 GAUGES**

2 are  $\frac{3}{4}$  full  
1 is empty.

The net effect is you are only operating on 50% across all three areas of your life.

So, I'm running at  $\frac{3}{4}$  spiritually and emotionally, which is pretty good...but if my physical gauge is reading zero and I'm falling over from exhaustion, then at BEST, I'm operating at half efficiency, to half my capacity.

*1 Timothy 4:8 ESV*

*(8) for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

So training your body does have a value, just not the same in eternal standards.

*1 Corinthians 9:27 ESV*

*(27) But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

Beccy likes going to the gym because it gives her emotional room.  
I like going to the gym because I burn off stress.  
Physical fitness increases your ability to handle stressful situations and better prepares you emotionally for the road ahead.

You have to build a Sabbath into your life.

Sunday isn't a Sabbath for me.

Some times I don't get a complete day off because of the demands of ministry and business, so I endeavor to grab two half days, or two mornings.

## **5. Lack of confidence.**

A lack of confidence is contagious.

The single greatest dragon or self demon you will ever beat is doubt.

Doubting you can do it.

Doubting, thinking God has left you.

Doubting you can make it.

Doubting He will come through.

*Hebrews 10:35 ESV*

*(35) Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.*

You don't lose your confidence, you throw it away.  
Confidence holds the key to your reward.  
If you lose confidence you fall short of the prize.

I took up Body Building as a sport for 2010, something totally different.

I didn't know what I was doing.

I got a coach...but the coach had a few views of life different than mine.

I put on over 50 lbs in a 6 month period at a top weight of 267.

When it came time to lose it, I stalled at 237 after 3 months my competition date got shifted so the pressure increased and nothing was moving.

I couldn't shift any weight. I lost my confidence. I was about to throw it in when I realized if I did that I would waste everything that I had worked 2 hours a day for 5 days a week.

So I got good council, changed my planned and worked harder.

I have dropped in 16 lbs in 2 weeks and will drop another 15 in the next 3.

I nearly threw it all away because I fixated on the obstacle, not the opportunity.

## **Winston Churchill - Had a history of failure and rejection:**

He said:

*'The pessimist sees the difficulty in the opportunity; the optimist sees the opportunity in each difficulty.'*

He had a stuttered as a child.

His father, who had wanted his son to become a barrister, thought Churchill was retarded because he did poorly in school, usually finishing near the bottom of his class.

Churchill failed the sixth grade, took three full terms to get to the next class in mathematics, and was rejected by both Oxford and Cambridge.

Churchill's father advised him to pursue a career in the Army. Following his father's advice, Churchill applied to Royal Military College at Sandhurst, the British equivalent to West Point in the United States, but he failed the entrance examination – twice.

After intense tutoring and a lot of cramming Churchill squeaked by the third time around.

After graduation, Churchill entered the British Army, a career that seemed to suit him.

By 1911, he had become First Lord of the Admiralty, a position he filled for the next four years.

In 1915, during World War I, Churchill helped engineer an unsuccessful battle, referred to as the Gallipoli disaster.

During the Gallipoli campaign, which was fought by Australian and New Zealand troops in a 10 month period 8,159 Australians died and 17,924 were wounded.

That is 2,608 a month.

To put that in a modern perspective, since the start of the Iraq war in 2003, a totally of 4726 coalition troops have died, that's 56 a month. Churchill took most of the blame and received a demotion.

Churchill held a variety of positions during the 1920's, and he demonstrated his real value as a commander. When World War II broke out, Churchill was reappointed, First Lord of the Admiralty, and became a member of the War Cabinet.

Early in the war, Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister, resigned. Churchill was the overwhelming choice to replace Chamberlain.

He accepted the position and helped lead England to victory.

Despite Churchill's success, he was heavily defeated in his bid for prime minister in 1945.

Many historians speculate that his success as a wartime leader led people to believe he could not perform as well during a time of peace. However, six years later, Churchill again became prime minister, a position that he held until he resigned in 1955.

When not serving in the government, Churchill spent his time writing books on English and world history, for which he won the 1953 Nobel Prize in Literature.

## 6. Lack of accountability.

*James 5:16*

*16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

So the context here is that there is a need for healing.

There is a need for wholeness in a person's life.

There is an area of their life that they are facing a battle that they need to get victory in.

And the root, the reason that they are whole is not physical, i.e., they don't have the flu; they don't have a broken leg etc.

No. It is something deeper, something internal, an issue of the soul.

The word sin here includes in its meaning your slips, your faults and your offenses.

So we are not just talking about what some would call obvious sins, or carnal lifestyle behavior, but we are talking about the hidden issues of the heart, the hidden fears and battles, the inner concerns, the areas of brokenness, the places where one is desiring victory but can't seem to get it.

The theme of James entire letter is the living out of this Christian faith in a day to day setting.

Not just hearing the words of Christ, but living the words of Christ.

I believe that in this passage James that in order for Christian leaders to be full functioning and in good emotional and physical health, they need to be able to share these secrets and issues of the heart.

They need to have people in their life that they can share the slips, the stumbles, the tumbles and the unexpected turn-arounds that scar us and cause offense and lead us ultimately to sin.

Man was never created to do life alone.

There are times when we maybe alone, but because of the nature of the God in who's image we were created, we were created for close, intimate and meaningful fellowship.

## **7. Lack of purpose.**

This leads to lack of vision for your life.

The lack of a vision for life under minds your daily mission and the lack of a daily missions means that you are just waiting to die, because you have nothing to live for.

A lack of purpose means that you never full reach your potential....so in a sense we have come full circle in touching on the things we need to touch on when pursuing our dreams.

### **1) Know the real desire of your heart.**

*You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah (Psalms 21:2, NIV)*

What do you really what to do?  
Who do you really what to be?  
Where do you really want to go?

### **2) Know what stirs your heart; what is your treasure, your passion?**

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*  
(Luke 12:34, NIV)(Matthew 6:21; 12:35)

What keeps you up at night?  
What do you come back from doing that makes you feel alive?  
What do you look forward to each week/month/year?

### **3) What are you good at? What is your gifting?**

A natural thing, not a spooky thing.

What do you like to do?

What comes naturally?

### **3) Seek counsel from mature Christian friends and leaders.**

*Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. (Proverbs 11:14, KJV)*

How do you have speaking into your life?

What do they say?

How do they see you?

Where do they see you going?

### **5) Listen to the witness of the Holy Spirit.**

(John 16:13, NIV)

(Romans 8:14-16, NIV)

Have you prayed?

Have you fasted?

What are the three things you think God is saying to you?

What are His strategies for those things?

What is His timing on those things?

### **6) What can you give yourself to 100%?**

(1John 3:16, NIV).

What can you lay your life down for?

What can you give yourself wholly to?

What in 20 years time – what will you be able to look back on and say

– “man that was fun, I loved those last 5/10/20 years!”

### **7) What produces good results, good fruit?**

(*Matthew 12:33, NIV*).

What is it that you like to do?

What comes naturally?

What has good results?