

Chasing Dreams and Fighting Dragons - The battle to pursue all that God has for you part 2:

Your home work for the next week is to read Genesis 37 through to 50 and familiarize yourself with the life of Joseph.

Just a thought:

Let's turn to Genesis 37-

Genesis 37:5-11 ESV

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

(6) He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed:

(7) Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold; my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf."

(8) His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

(9) Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

(10) But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?"

(11) And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Lets Recap from last week:

There is a word that is often bandied around in Christian circles and has been so for at least 30 years.

The word is destiny

The challenge with this word is it is not a Bible word.

In fact the only time it is mentioned in the Word is in Isaiah where it makes mention of a Babylonian deity named Meni or fate, which the English translation of is destiny.

The truth is we don't have to use non-biblical words or concepts to explain what God has for us.

I don't have time today to explain to you how our modern theology has been co-mingled with so much non-Christian thought and philosophy, I deal with that extensively in my book Now to Next.

But let me just put it to you this way,
we don't need bad theology to have a great life
we don't need to be toasting the moon and the stars worshipping foreign Gods to enjoy a God glorifying future.

So if destiny is deity we choose not worship, what do we as Christians have to describe what God has for us?

I would suggest that we have great Bible concepts like

- Dream
- Future
- Hope
- Sovereignty

A dream is:

A vision, an aspiration, an ambition that you long for.

A future:

A future is happenings to come.

The future is the place where things that are yet to happen, happen. Where the promises and the possibilities combine with the preparation to make the manifest the reality we have been dreaming of.

A Hope:

Hope is not an ethereal thing.

Hope is grounded firmly in the fact that you have faith that Jesus is who He says He is and can do what He says he can do.

And this hope, gives rise to trust.

And this trust is the thing that drives us forward with eyes up looking for our future as we pursue our dream.

Sovereignty:

Sovereignty means that God has all power over all things.

That He can intervene how and where He sees fit as He sees fit.

- He is not dependant upon us
- He wants to work with us
- He wants to work on our behalf
- He wants to make a way for us
- He really doesn't need us
- He is not sitting around waiting for permission to move on His earth

Let's move on and start looking at the life of Joseph.

If you were not here last week, can I encourage you to download the teaching for free or join the discussion on CLC people?

The Power of a persons dream:

Dreams are the substance of great achievement.
People who dream become builders of great things.
In spite of opposition, hardships, persecution, ridicule, they never lose their dream.
They continue on and give their life to the pursuit of their dream and the translation of that dream into everyday reality.

Everything God does is according to a pattern that is based upon a principle in His Word.
When we base our lives on the principles of God's Word and not on the personalities of the church, the straighter and more productive our course will be.

Potential:

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 the possibility has become an actuality.
That what has lain dormant has manifested itself.

It has become fruit,
it has matured,
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
We often talk about people having great potential.

What we are saying is that we believe their life has possibilities, their giftedness has possibilities, but that these possibilities are just not visibly evident.

To be honest most people live in a sort of deluded sense of latent potential.

They judge others by their actions and themselves by their intentions. They judge others based on what they are or are not doing and themselves by what they one day plan to do.

Let's spend a little time looking at the principles that lay behind his latent potential becoming realized.

1. Joseph had dream was God breathed:

It was a God breathed, a God inspired picture of what his future could hold for him.

The dream held the picture of an impactful life.

A life of legacy and national influence.

A dream of provision and salvation for God's people and his family.

A picture of prosperity in a season of lack.

A successful and fruitful life in the face of national economic disaster and down turn.

All truly God inspired dreams include a vision to touch and change the lives of others.

All truly God inspired visions of prosperity include the desire to use our wealth to change the world and save souls.

We have become very selfish with our doctrines of prosperity.

We have limited them to me and mine, not us and ours.

True biblical prosperity is always under girded with the sense as John Wesley put it: *'to make as much as we can, save as much as we can and give as much as we can.'*

The dream,

the picture of the future,

the vision for his life that God gave him was a picture in Joseph's spirit and mind that would eventually become manifest in his flesh.

You see at the time of the dream, it was latent potential; it would take him the next 13 years or so to see it come to fruition.

We over estimate what we can do in 12 months and under estimate what God can do in 10 years.

Make sure that what you are giving your life to originated in the heart of God and not in the head of man.

2. Joseph never lost sight of his dream, regardless of the situations or circumstances that he faced

The Word teaches us that God is the author and finisher of our faith. The principle here is that God will finish what He starts, but He is under no obligation to finish what He does not author.

AGAIN-

Now this is important.

The landscape of the Christian church is littered with people with unsatisfied lives.

They have spent the last 20 years chasing their destinies instead of living their dreams.

They have spent 30 years trying to make something happen instead of living out what God had for them in real time.

When God implants dreams in our hearts, He will then see to it that they are completed as we submit to Him and co-operate with Him, as we are lead by the spirit.

Now the power does not lay in the dream.

Be it God-given or self inspired.

Joseph's dream was nothing more than a fantasy which for most of his life would have felt more like a nightmare.

For a dream to become a reality, it has to have a plan attached.

The power for the execution of his dream lay in the partnership that he formed as he pursued it.

That is where we come into working in partnership with God for His sovereign purpose for our lives.

We trust Him.

We submit to Him, and we faithfully follow Him regardless of how rough the road gets at times.

Without a dream to achieve we live without hope.
But with a dream our hope sustains us through incredible obstacles.
Joseph's success came not from his identification with family, friends or circumstance, but came from his identification with God regardless of the response of his family and friends and regardless of the circumstances that surrounded him.
He truly gave his life and future to partner with God.

3. Joseph's times of testing were not times of failure but times of preparation:

The preparation of our life is dependant upon the mandate of our life.
The mandate or dream of our life will determine our preparation.
God was preparing Joseph to be a leader.
And every leader knows there is a price to pay for that leadership.

You will always pay for your education and the school of hard knocks extracts more from you, and makes more of you than any Harvard MBA.

Joseph spent 13 years in intense confrontation with temptation, isolation and accusation, betrayal, and bitterness.
13 years identifying and fighting the dragons, the inner demons that would destroy or hinder his future role and possibilities.

These times hadn't meant that God had left him.
In fact they meant that God was making him.
If Joseph was to fulfill the God-given dream of becoming a national leader it would take time.
Preparation is the foundation of all future success.

The greater the truth,
The deeper the roots,
The taller the building,
The deeper the foundations.

You have to go down to go up.
You have to learn to serve to lead.
The bigger the prayer, the bigger the dream, the greater the price.

4. Joseph marched to the tune of a different drummer:

Bernard Shaw said:

'The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.'

Joseph was an unreasonable man.

Regardless of his environment, accusation or slander, temptation or abuse he marched to the sound of a different drum.

He heard Heaven calling.

He heard the sound of his future out there. And he was not prepared to sacrifice it on the altar of petty daily problems and challenges.

Mediocre people settle for good at the sake of best.

He could have allowed bitterness to consume him as a slave and settled there for life.

He could have succumbed to moral compromise and lived out his days as a kept man in Potifar's house.

He could have given in to the dragons that lay behind the feeling of being forgotten and overlooked and accepted his lot as steward of the jail while those around him were promoted.

But there was something different about Joseph.

At every turn he chooses to battle his dragons in pursuit of his dream.

His internal vision, his dream of what the future could hold urged him forward.

So it is not a matter of just having an idea and charging after it, you have to make sure it is the right idea and you have the right internal and external resources to make it successful.

And if at first you don't succeed then listen to the sound of Heaven and march to that beat and not to the sound of the baying and calling of the crowd.

5. Joseph learned that perseverance outlasts persecution:

Somewhere along the way Joseph discovered that perseverance outlasts persecution.

And if his God was for him, then no one can be against him.

That's what makes Joseph a great hero of our faith.

He never gave up.

God wants us all to be heroes of faith.

I ask you to take Joseph's life and look at what made him a hero of our faith.

The principles that we can apply today.

I firmly believe that God-given dreams in God-favored people make a God-blessed world.

On the way to his dream Joseph would battle many personal demons, personal dragons.

James 4:7

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Our ability and willingness to resist the devil is directly proportionate to our ability and willingness to submit to God.

You can face down any and all of the dragons that are in the way of your future if you will surrender yourself to God and His perfect will for your life.

I was thinking about the overall struggles Joseph would have had to have faced and some of the personal things he would have had to have beaten down and killed in order to move ahead.

Here are just a few:

- Bitterness
- Envy
- Betrayal
- Slander
- Humiliation

- Being lied about
- Facing a victim mentality
- Being defrauded by those he befriended
-

6. Joseph had to get big on the inside:

Evelyn Adams won the New Jersey lottery... twice.
1985 and 1988.

She now lives in a trailer.

William 'Bud' Post won the lottery in 1988 in Pennsylvania, and now lives on Social Security.

His girlfriend scammed him for money.

His brother tried to kill him for money.

3 other family members talked him out of cash that went into hopeless investments.

12 months after he won \$16.2 million he was \$1 million in debt.

In 1989 William Hunt won \$3.1 million.

Two years later he was broke and charged with murder.

He spent his fortune on a divorce, and crack cocaine.

The common trait between each of these people is not that they won money, but why they squandered it.

Before their winnings every one of them was living hand to mouth.

They didn't know how to handle \$100 let alone \$1 million.

Another way to put it was that they didn't have the internal capacity to handle the external opportunity.

Now think of Joseph, he was sold into slavery between 14-19 years of age and had the dreams before that.

So let's split the difference, let's say he was 17 when he started shooting his mouth off at home about how awesome he was.

Sound familiar?

Anyone?

To take him, a young, arrogant, daddy's boy / occasional sheep herder and put him into leadership over the civil affairs of the most powerful nation of the day would have been what.....desinty....exciting.....NO, it would have been disastrous.

Why?

He had no capacity.

There where 3 things Joseph needed as he marched forward into his future:

- a) Favor of God and man
- b) Wisdom
- c) Courage

Favor without wisdom leads to missed opportunities.

Courage without favor leads to frustration.

And courage without wisdom is foolishness.

He may have had the courage to declare his dream, but he certainly didn't have favor or wisdom to execute the dream.

God had to build that capacity in him.

God had to bring him to a place of being able to say no to corruption in Potifar's house, so he would say not to corruption in Pharaoh's house.

God had to bring him to a place of humility and forgiveness so he would rescue his family not order their execution.

At the age of 30 Joseph stepped onto the stage and saved Egypt and the Jewish people from devastation.

In those 13-15 years God used conflict, hardship and personal disaster to make him into not only the man he needed to be, but the man he had always dreamed of being.

7. Your life has potential

As we have said already, there are two types of potential, latent and realized.

All of us are vessels of latent potential.

All of us have dreams, ideas, inventions, passions that are laying, waiting to be realized.

You may have a gift of mercy; you just need someone to care for.

A gift of hospitality, you're just looking for a place to plug in and host people.

The gift of giving, you are just struggling to get the business going.

But as I have already said....perseverance always outlasts persecution.

Thomas Alva Edison

Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) is considered to be one of America's most prolific and successful inventors. He is credited as the inventor of the phonograph, the incandescent light bulb and the automatic telegraph.

As a child, Thomas Edison tormented his teachers. He rarely sat still, constantly badgered his teachers with questions, could not focus, and seemed to be ignoring their instructions. He was hearing-impaired, but his teachers believed he was also slow, probably retarded. Before Edison had turned six, he had burned down his family's barn, a fact some used as proof of his mental impairment. His mother tried several different schools, but the results were always the same. Finally, his mother took him out of school and educated him at home.

When Edison was older, he got a position working for the railroad. Not one to let work interfere with his quest for knowledge, he obtained permission to set up a chemistry lab in a baggage car. His boss soon regretted the favor after Edison destroyed a telegraph station while experimenting with a battery.

The inventor became so focused on his experiments that he often neglected to do his job.

He was fired the following year after he failed to see a danger signal and caused a train to derail.

A few years later, out of money and work, he went to New York City to find a job.

After several unsuccessful interviews, he was waiting for yet another interview when he learned that the company's telegraphic gold-price indicator had broken down.

He fixed it and landed a job at the firm. Because of this new job, he later invented the Edison Universal Stock Printer, which earned him enough money to set up his own laboratory.

He went on to perfect the electric light bulb, invent the phonograph, and introduce a motion picture machine. Someone once asked him how it felt to have failed so many times before succeeding: 'I never failed once,' Edison replied. 'It happens to be a 2,000 step process.'

Over his lifetime, Edison was granted 1,093 patents for his inventions; among them are the incandescent light bulb, an automatic telegraphy machine, the phonograph, and the motion picture machine. After one unsuccessful attempt to create a storage battery, he said, 'Well, at least we know 8,000 things that don't work!' Edison became the first person inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

Edison said:

'Many of life's failures are men who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.'

You gain nothing by giving up.

You know giving up is only hard the first time.

After that you accept it of yourself.

Your friends and family expect it of your life.

And you spend all your days fulfilling the self-fulfilling prophecy that you will never amount to anything.