

Sermon Series - Extraordinary Dreams

Sermon Title: Dream Realization The They Factor

Sermon Text: Genesis 41:53-57, 50:15-21

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

Sermon Summary: This message is the final message in a series on Joseph, who was one of Jacob's 12 sons. Joseph had been given a dream by God when he was only seventeen years of age and now, in his late thirties, the dream is coming true. God's dream for Joseph was certainly for Joseph, but it was not only for Joseph. The dream also had implications for his family, his homeland, as well as surrounding nations like Egypt. In other words, a large part of Joseph's dream was used by God to save his family from starvation. Another huge part of the dream was to save the lives of thousands if not millions of Egyptians. The moral of the story for us today is that God's dream has not changed. He still desires to save lives and he works through His people to do so. The Bible is very clear that God's dream for any individual is also designed to build His Kingdom by saving the lives of others. God's redemptive plan for humankind is an underpinning and foundational concept throughout the Old Testament and finds fulfillment in the New Testament through Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection! This is true spiritually as we share the good news of God's forgiveness through Christ, but is also true physically as Christians are involved in helping feed, clothe, and shelter those in need.

Dream Realization: The They Factor

"My Jesus my Savior, Lord there is none like You! All of my days I want to praise the wonders of Your might - Your love! My comfort, my shelter, Tower of refuge and strength!" A major component of God's extraordinary dream for you is that you have that kind of relationship with Him! And God wants the fellowship between you and Him to be such that you are in a constant state of worship! "Let every breath, all that I am, never cease to worship You!" Another part of God's extraordinary dream for us as a church is that we teach our children to be excited about God and His love for them! That's a huge part of our mission here at Northshore Church. We want to transform worship, people and the world, but if we don't reach our children, the transformation ends with our generation. It has been said that a church with only older people has little future and a church with only young people has little wisdom. But together, with our extraordinary God, we can transform our world! And that is the "They" factor! Let's pray and ask our Lord to show us why this is so important! Pray!

God's extraordinary dream for us has not changed since the days of Joseph and his coat of many colors. God gave Joseph an amazing dream and vision. However, that dream was not just for Joseph or his family. God's dream for Joseph included the nation of Israel, the foreign nation of Egypt and other nations as well. In the past weeks we've talked about Joseph's God-given dreams and how they collided with reality, how he faced many dream killers, and had to endure a long wait for dream fulfillment! Let's recap the dreamer's story.

Recap

Joseph's brothers hated him and sold him into slavery. "Let's see how your dream of greatness works out for you now!" Joseph was then sold by the slave traders to an Egyptian named Potiphar. Joseph could have just given in to the dream killers of depression and despair, but not Joseph! In spite of his circumstances, he worked hard for Potiphar and was put in charge of the entire household. Later, Potiphar's wife made advances toward Joseph and when he refused, Potiphar's wife accused him of a terrible crime and Potiphar in his anger had Joseph imprisoned.

Talk about a dream killer. Joseph, however, works hard again, earning the warden's deep respect, and Joseph becomes the chief trustee. At some point two of Pharaoh's closest aids offended Pharaoh and were imprisoned. Joseph was put in charge of them as well. Later they both had disturbing dreams and Joseph interprets them. The dreams came true just as Joseph had predicted and the cup-bearer was supposed to tell Pharaoh about Joseph's plight, but he forgot for two years. Joseph endured so much, but continued to trust God! Later, Pharaoh has a couple of bad dreams no one can interpret. The Cup Bearer remembers Joseph and Pharaoh has Joseph brought from prison. Joseph interprets the dreams and Pharaoh is so impressed he makes Joseph his right hand man, second in command only to him!

The first part of Pharaoh's dream comes true and there are seven years of amazing harvest. Joseph instructs each town to build storage facilities and to set aside a portion of the crops each year. They do so. Later a severe famine begins. It will last seven years, but just two years into the famine. Joseph's family who lived in Canaan, ran out of food and his brothers were sent to buy food from Egypt. It's an amazing story of how Joseph's dreams he had when he was only seventeen years old, were now coming true. If you missed the last few weeks of this series, thanks to the hard work of some amazing volunteers, you can go back and listen or watch on the website. Or you can read the story yourself in the book of Genesis.

I've already mentioned, God had used the dream, not only for Joseph, but for Joseph's family as well. The Dream was not only about the family being saved from starvation, but was also about his family being saved from horrible dysfunction and division. Remember, God's dream for Joseph was not so much for his brothers to bow down to him, but that he would embrace them and be reconciled to them. But the dream was even bigger than Joseph's family. It had to do with God's plans for the nation of Israel, and His hopes to even reach out to the Egyptians. And if you remember from last week, some of the Egyptians were already seeing evidence of the One True God. Remember when Joseph's brothers were explaining to Joseph's Egyptian steward about the silver being put back in their sacks...

Genesis 43:23 "It's all right," he said. "Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

And now listen to these words in Genesis 41:53-57 which tells us...

God's Extraordinary Dream for Joseph Included Physical Salvation for Multitudes

Genesis 41:53 The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end,
Genesis 41:54 and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food.
Genesis 41:55 When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."
Genesis 41:56 When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt.
Genesis 41:57 And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the world.

This is such an amazing passage of Scripture! Not only had Joseph's God-given dream come true, the interpretation Joseph had given concerning Pharaoh's dreams was now coming true. And because of Joseph's wisdom to set aside and store food during the seven good years, there was plenty to go around during the seven years of famine! So here you have a little Hebrew boy, one of twelve brothers, who God uses to literally save thousands, if not millions of lives. Joseph had a dream that he would someday be a great leader, but I'm sure there were many times he had his doubts. Was it just a dream? No! God had a plan, and that plan was for Joseph to be used by God to save lives during the famine, but there were deeper implications. Do you realize what a big deal it was for the Egyptian people to cry out to Pharaoh and for Pharaoh to instruct them to go to Joseph? Pharaoh was considered a god to the Egyptian people, and yet he tells them to turn to a Hebrew named Joseph. This brings us to the "They" Factor of Joseph's God-given dream. It wasn't just about Joseph, the you factor, or his family, the we factor, it was about the "they" factor

Joseph never forgot the "they factor." Years later, after his father Jacob, also known as Israel, passed away, Joseph reminds his brothers of the "they" factor. Listen to Genesis 50:15-21...

Genesis 50:15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?"

Even after Joseph had embraced them and wept over them, they are still carrying guilt and fear about what they had done those many years earlier. And here's what they did...

Genesis 50:16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died:

Genesis 50:17 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father. " When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

Genesis 50:18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

Genesis 50:19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Genesis 50:21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. " And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

What others had intended for evil, God used for good! God is just amazing that way! So once again we see a stark difference between the one who trusts God's plan and dream for their life and the one who does not. Joseph had come to realize that God had been in control all along and was working all things together for his good. Joseph's brothers, on the other hand, had lived a life of regret and fear. When we trust God we realize that nothing gets through God's protective care of us unless God allows it and if He allows it, there's a greater purpose to be achieved! And we see this in our story as God used Joseph's dream to save the physical lives of countless numbers of people!

God still cares about the physical lives and well being of people and a part of the mission of Northshore Church in its 20 years has been to transform lives spiritually, and physically. God's mission hasn't changed! God has given Northshore Church a dream, a mission, a vision! Our mission is to transform worship, people and the world. Our vision is to raise up a healthy church that will impact the north shore and ultimately the world with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ! We do this in many ways. One way is by supporting local mission activities in our area like Bethel Colony Transformation Center and the Women at the Well ministry in New Orleans. And our support of the New Orleans Mission and their local campus in Lacombe. We support Community Christian Concern, Crisis Pregnancy Center and others locally. We've helped on several Habitat for Humanity house building projects right here in Slidell.

Another way we do missions is by supporting missionaries through our gifts to the cooperative program of the Southern Baptist Convention. A portion of our tithes and offerings each week go to support close to 4,000 foreign missionaries and around 4,000 missionaries serving in the U.S., Canada, and the U.S. territories. Northshore Church also supports other missionaries through our Missions Extravaganza and through extra benevolence money that comes in throughout the year. Many of our people fund their own mission trips to places like Baja, Mexico, where some of our folks will be going on in just a few weeks. They will be building a home for a family there that has no home. This is the people of Northshore Church touching the lives of other people in different parts of the world in the Name of Jesus! We've been doing missions since the very beginning of our church. And when we have a chance to do something that literally helps meet the physical needs of others we seek to do that! We have been on many mission trips to Haiti and have built numerous homes for people. After the devastating earthquake of 2010 in Haiti, we ramped up our efforts to build homes there, which in many cases are not much bigger than some of your storage buildings, but they are thankful to have a home. We've also been on numerous medical mission trips there. We've been to Guatemala and, as I mentioned, Baja Mexico. I want to show you a video of one of the trips we made to Haiti a number of years ago, 2009. This is just a small sample of the "they factor" in God's extraordinary dreams for our church...

Video of Haiti

I just love hearing that precious child singing Jesus loves me and with such amazing joy! And what a transition to this amazing truth...

God's Extraordinary Dream for Joseph Included Spiritual Salvation for Many

Genesis 50:19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?"

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

"Saving many lives!" This certainly had a literal, physical application, for Joseph, his family and for the Hebrews and the Egyptians. But there was a spiritual component to what was going on in the story of Joseph that runs deep. We've already talked about how God's extraordinary dream for Joseph was not so much about his brothers bowing down to him, but about Joseph embracing them and weeping over them! It was more about forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation for the family. This story and what God was doing through the various components of this story is rooted in God's redemptive plan for humanity.

The Spiritual Salvation of Men and Women has been God's Dream All Along!

The redemptive plan of God runs throughout the entire Old Testament. We see it beginning in the Book of Genesis and going all the way through the New Testament. Some people call this the Crimson Cord! We use cords to connect things or to hold things together. Crimson, as you know, is red! It is blood red! And for that reason, when we think about the precious blood of Jesus that He poured out on the Cross to cover our wickedness and sin, we see examples of that epic sacrifice throughout Holy Scripture. It's the Crimson Cord that ties the whole story together from Genesis to Revelation, beginning to end. And when you begin to see the crimson chord, you begin to realize that the Bible is not just another book! It is divine revelation from God. It is God's love letter to us written to show us and to offer us eternal salvation.

Now let me point out something to you from Joseph's story. Jacob lost his son Joseph for 22 years. He thought Joseph had been killed. Twenty two years was a terrible loss, but that loss ended up saving Jacob, his sons, their wives, and his grandchildren and others! And do you remember the crimson chord that showed up in this story? Joseph's coat of many colors was stained by the blood of a goat to lead his father to believe he had been killed. And while Joseph had not actually been killed, Jacob thought he had been. However, while Joseph sacrificed some of his best years of life as a slave and a prisoner, that sacrifice ended up saving the very brothers who had once hated him, as well as a bunch of pagan Egyptians. And what does this have to do with a crimson chord? Joseph's coat of many colors being stained with blood of a goat was a foreshadowing of things to come. There was once another Father who would lose His Son in order to save lives. But actually, He didn't lose Him, He sent Him! Listen...

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

You see Jesus' clothing was stained by the blood of a lamb, the perfect Lamb of God, his own blood! And of course, Jesus literally died. And like Jacob, The Heavenly Father was devastated and heartbroken. He didn't turn His back on Jesus when He died, but He did turn and look away as the one who knew no sin became sin for us. Our Heavenly Father knew our only hope was for Jesus to die and if He looked on the moment Jesus took the full weight of the sin of the world it may have been too hard not to call a stop to that terrible injustice. However, our Heavenly Father could see things Jacob couldn't. The Heavenly Father knew about the crimson chord and that Jesus would be resurrected! And how long had the Heavenly Father known about this? From the very beginning. He knew that if He made Adam and Eve in His image and gave them choices, if they made the wrong choice, there would be consequences and there would have to be a Savior. He even did something in the garden of Eden which started the crimson cord that runs throughout the Bible. You might remember that Adam and Eve, after they had sinned and eaten the forbidden fruit, they sewed fig leaves together for coverings. However,

Genesis 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Folks that is significant! Adam had named the animals. It was probably a bit unnerving for them to be told to put on the skin of an animal. But God wanted them to realize that because of their sin, a life had to be taken in order to cover their wickedness! This is the beginning of the crimson cord in the Bible. It was a foreshadowing of the fact that Jesus' skin would one day be ripped and torn and His blood spilled in order to cover our sin and to make a way for us to be forgiven and reconciled. Our sin had to be taken away in order for our Holy and righteous Heavenly Father to restore the broken relationship and to be able to once again embrace us and to fellowship with us! It is our Extraordinary God's extraordinary dream for every one of us ordinary people. But never forget that to God you are quite special. You are made in His image, but you are uniquely created and unlike any other human being who has ever lived and that's why God sent Jesus to die for you!

And by the way, when the Father sent His One and Only Son, Jesus was very much a willing participant. Saving lives was his mission! Listen...

John 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Why was it necessary for Jesus to literally die? The writer of Hebrews tells us this...

Hebrews 9:11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

Hebrews 9:12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

And what does serving the Living God look like? Well, it has to do with the “They” Factor.

God’s Extraordinary Dream for You includes Sharing the Salvation Message

We are supposed to care about those who Jesus died to save. They should matter to us. It's not just about you and me, but it's also about them!

2 Corinthians 5:14 For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

2 Corinthians 5:15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

2 Corinthians 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Have you ever considered how God’s dream for you might include something bigger than you and could potentially touch the lives of people you don’t even know? Have you considered the fact that if you are a follower of Christ you are now an ambassador for Christ?

Wouldn't it be beautiful, if we had some way to paint a picture of what Jesus did for us on the Cross and how we are now clothed in the righteousness of God and are a new creation, because the old has gone and the new has come? Wouldn't that be a masterpiece? Well, I'm excited to tell you there is a way to paint that picture. It's through the waters of baptism. And in just a few moments we have some folks who will paint this very beautiful picture. Let me explain. You see, water doesn't wash away our sins, it's the blood of Jesus that takes away sin. Baptism is a beautiful way to show this. It is a reenactment of the Crucifixion. When you step into the water it is a picture of Jesus stepping into this world and onto the cross to die for your sins. When you go under the water, it is a picture of the burial of Jesus. When you come up, it is a picture of Jesus' resurrection from the grave! However, Baptism is like a hologram, it paints

more than one picture. It is also an outward expression of an inward experience! It is our public profession of faith in Jesus as our Savior. It is a picture of how we have buried our old selfish way of life, and have been raised to walk a new life in Christ. We've made the decision to live out God's extraordinary dream for us! God's Word says it best...

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Romans 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

Romans 6:7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Romans 6:10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Romans 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

You see, baptism paints a beautiful picture of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Baptism is not what saves a person, but it is a very important step in declaring a person's intent to leave their old life behind and live a new life for Christ! It is a first step towards including others in God's dream for you by showing them what Jesus did for you on the Cross and how it has changed you on the inside. Coming to faith in Jesus and then painting the picture of your faith through baptism doesn't mean that you will never make a mistake or that you'll never sin again, but it means that you are willing to begin the process of sanctification! What is that? Justification happens when we accept what Jesus did for us on the cross by the shedding of His blood. We are justified by His sacrifice alone and not by our good works. It is by grace, which is the undeserved favor of God! That happens when we receive the gift of salvation, which is free for us, but cost Jesus His life! Sanctification is the process of growing in grace! Becoming more like Jesus each and every day! Salvation clothes us in the righteousness of Christ, sanctification helps us begin to live out the righteousness of Christ in our daily lives! That's in essence what Paul is talking about when he says:

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

We don't work for our salvation, we work out our salvation in our daily lives! We allow the righteousness of Christ to permeate our lives in every area of our lives and as we do, we will be living the dream: the dream God has for us to live! What does this even mean? What difference would this make in the way I live my life? When you are allowing the righteousness of Christ to permeate your life, then you will begin treating others differently. There will be things you will

stop doing and there will be things you will start doing, because you are now following the example and the attitude of Jesus Christ! You'll begin to be less judgemental, more loving, less irritated with others and more patient with others! You'll begin to be less selfish and more selfless! You'll begin to have different priorities! You'll begin seeing things through different lenses. Some things you were okay with, you won't be okay with anymore because you will realize those things do not honor God, while other things you never wanted to be a part of because you thought they were no fun or old fashioned, you'll see value in. Paul puts it perfectly...

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, Philippians 2:2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

Philippians 2:4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

I wrote and recorded a song back in 2000 called Pour Me Out. I'll put a link to it in the notes. (you can listen to it here: <https://www.larrymcewen.com/> scroll down to the music portion-Make Up Your Mind album) It says,

"Only one life to live and it will soon be past, don't you know that the things you give away are the only things that last? That little child you feed, that hungry soul in need, when Jesus comes again, what'll be important then, or when your life comes to an end will He say you've been His friend? So pour me out and empty me take all I am my all I give, my heart desires for you to live so it's not me, no, no, but You they see! This world is not my home, no I'm just passing through, a stranger in a foreign land, but I've got a job to do. Turn darkness into light, help the blind receive their sight, wanna fight the good fight and finish the race and some sweet day I'm gonna see your blessed face. What good would it do you if you got it all, but you don't know what it's all about. What good would it do you to get more than you need, you'll leave it all here when it's your time to leave!" So pour me out and empty me take all I am my all I give my heart desires for you to live so it's not me, no, no, but You they see!"

And we have some folks here today who have done just that and want to paint the picture of their faith for you today.

Baptism

Prayer and invitation.